RV TODAY

ISSUE 9 • FEB/MAR 2023

THE *Honest* TRUTH

A Full-Time RV Family Shares What They Wish They'd Known

EVs for RVs:

Is It Too Soon To Use Electric Vehicles for RVing?

Digging Into Detroit:

A Foodie Hotspot

RV Toys

MUST-HAVE GEAR & ACCESSORIES

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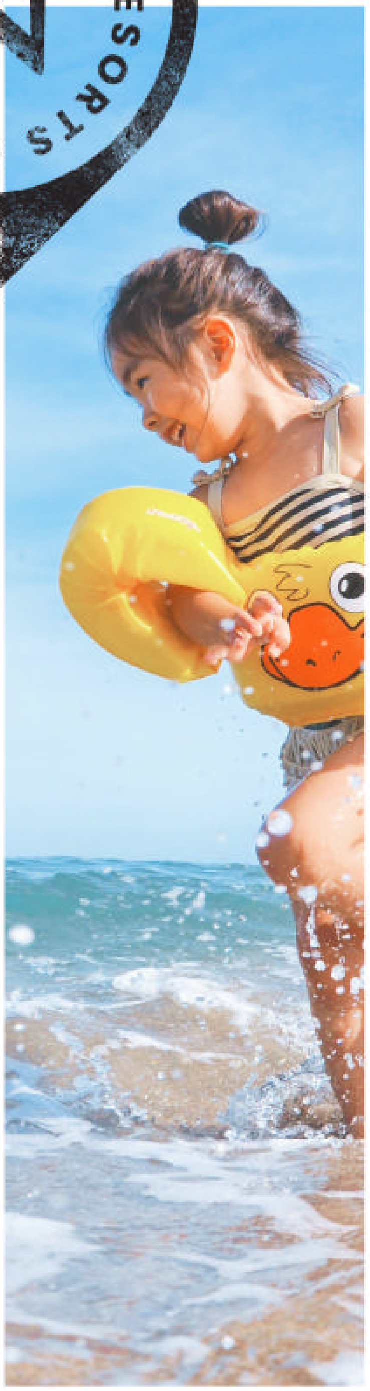

Patches from national parks. Major city magnets. Or an album of family vacation photos. Everyone likes a keepsake from a vacation. The 2023 Newmar RV Resorts Guide lets you find the country's best Class A, Super C, and mobility-friendly RV resorts. Get all of the information you need in one spot, with pictures, an interactive map, and a brand-new sorting feature so you can pick resorts based on exactly what you want in a road trip—and collect memories along the way.

Newmarcorp.com/resortsguide23

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On the cover:
Missy Late loves travel and camping! Follow along: ***@mandtinmt***

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FROM THE Publisher

Greetings from Tampa, as I attempt to navigate the wild scene here at the Florida RV SuperShow.

In 2022, we were here in our RV, which makes the experience of trying to see everything a lot easier. There's so much to see here that you could spend a few days just in the aftermarket vendors area, looking through all the additions and improvements you could buy for your rig. This show has something for everyone, no matter what type of RV you're looking for.

If you're looking for a rig and don't know where to start, I'd recommend spending a few days walking from RV to RV and checking them out. Stop asking, "What type of RV should I get?" in Facebook groups, and find a local RV show near you. Or if you aren't in a hurry, wait for one of the large RV shows.

If you can't make it to a big RV show and want to see what you've missed, there is a really good chance that you'll be able to see it on YouTube soon, as there is an army of content creators here. Just search for the RV you're looking for and "Tampa RV Show" and I'm sure you'll find it.

We really want to help you find the perfect RV for you, so we've included a section in the back of this issue with a listing of events and rallies to help you find, see, and tour the RV that might be right for you and your family.

We'll also be making some improvements to our website and the magazine to help you discover RVs you may have never heard of, and that you may be interested in owning, or at least touring.

If there's any way we can help you find your perfect RV, please never hesitate to reach out. Just email us at *info@rvtoday.com* and tell us how we can help, or tell us what you think is missing in the industry or in our magazine that could make the shopping process easier.

Demian Ross

demian@rvtoday.com

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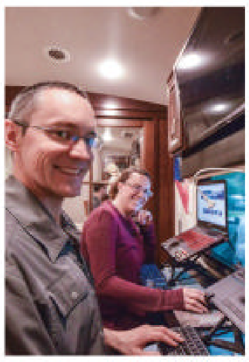
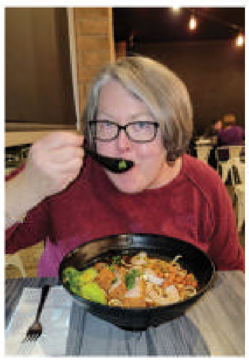
- Shannon Murray
- Scott Russell
- Dennis Gaub
- Gary Riesing

Contribute to RV Today
Do you have a story idea, product you love or campground to highlight? Reach out to us at *collab@rvtoday.com*

Contributor Spotlight



Kevin Skelton *@_neverstopadventuring*
How to Choose a Generator
Kevin and Christine have been traveling with their three children in a fifth wheel for over four years while working remotely, homeschooling, and exploring the country. They share budgeting tips, the best places to travel and RV projects on their Never Stop Adventuring YouTube channel and website at ***neverstopadventuring.com.***



Anne Klumpp *@ontheroadofadventure*
Digging into Detroit
Anne has been traveling full-time in a Class A motorhome since April 2019 with her husband, Brian, and their dog, Skipper. They share their adventures, including their experiences of local culture through food and beverage, home cooking, and RV life on Instagram and their blog ***ontheroadofadventure.com***

Celeste Orr *@celeste_redefined*
EVs for RVs
Celeste is the author of Togetherness Redefined: Finding a Different Kind of Family Togetherness. She lives near Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island in Maine and writes at ***togethernessredefined.com.***

Katelyn Newstate *@newstatenomads*
Everglades National Park
Katelyn travels with her husband, Howard, and their three pups: Piper, Ella and Scout. They have been all over the world and love sharing their passion for travel and adventure through their YouTube channel Newstate Nomads and on their website at ***newstatenomads.com.***

Happy CAMPERS

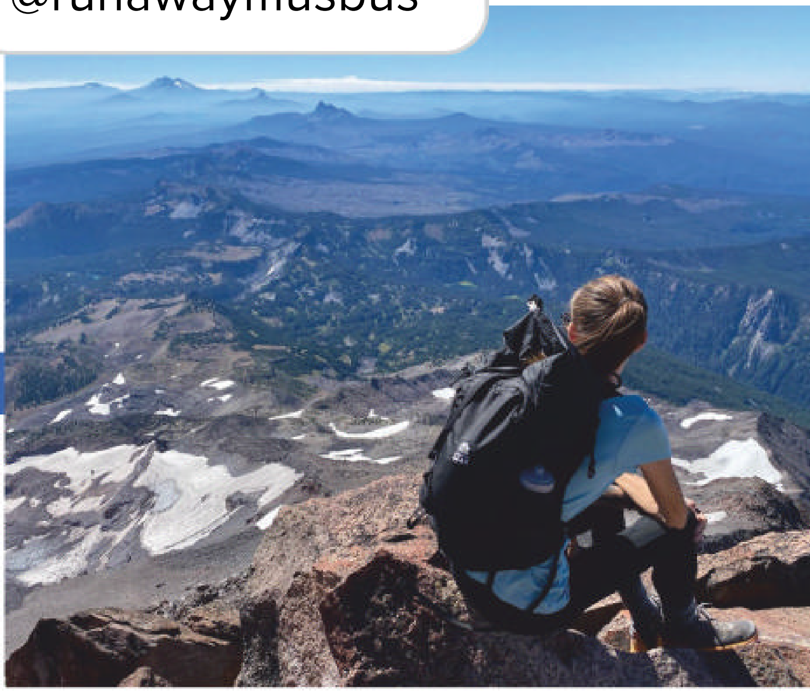
Our readers share what they love about RVing!

"The freedom!"
@rollingthroughreality

"How you can live with much less and get by just fine."
@fittsfamilytravels

> Being able to unplug and unwind!”
> @dreaminofairstreamin

> The way it heals through times of grieving.”
> @runawaymusbus



> Living full time on the road created an environment to spend our time working on what means the most to us.”
> @the.buslife.kitchen

*We want to hear from you! Share what makes you a happy camper by sending an email to **collab@rvtoday.com**.*

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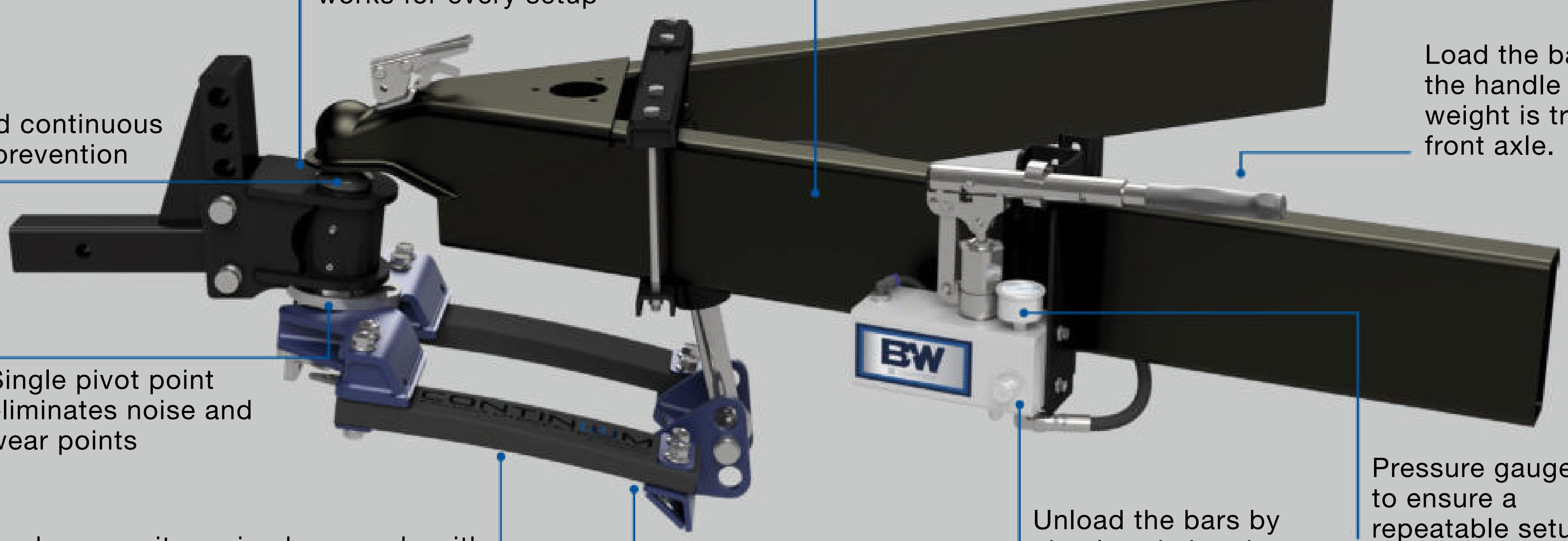

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all things vintage

TAKE A RIDE ON THE RETRO SIDE WITH THIS VINTAGE RV

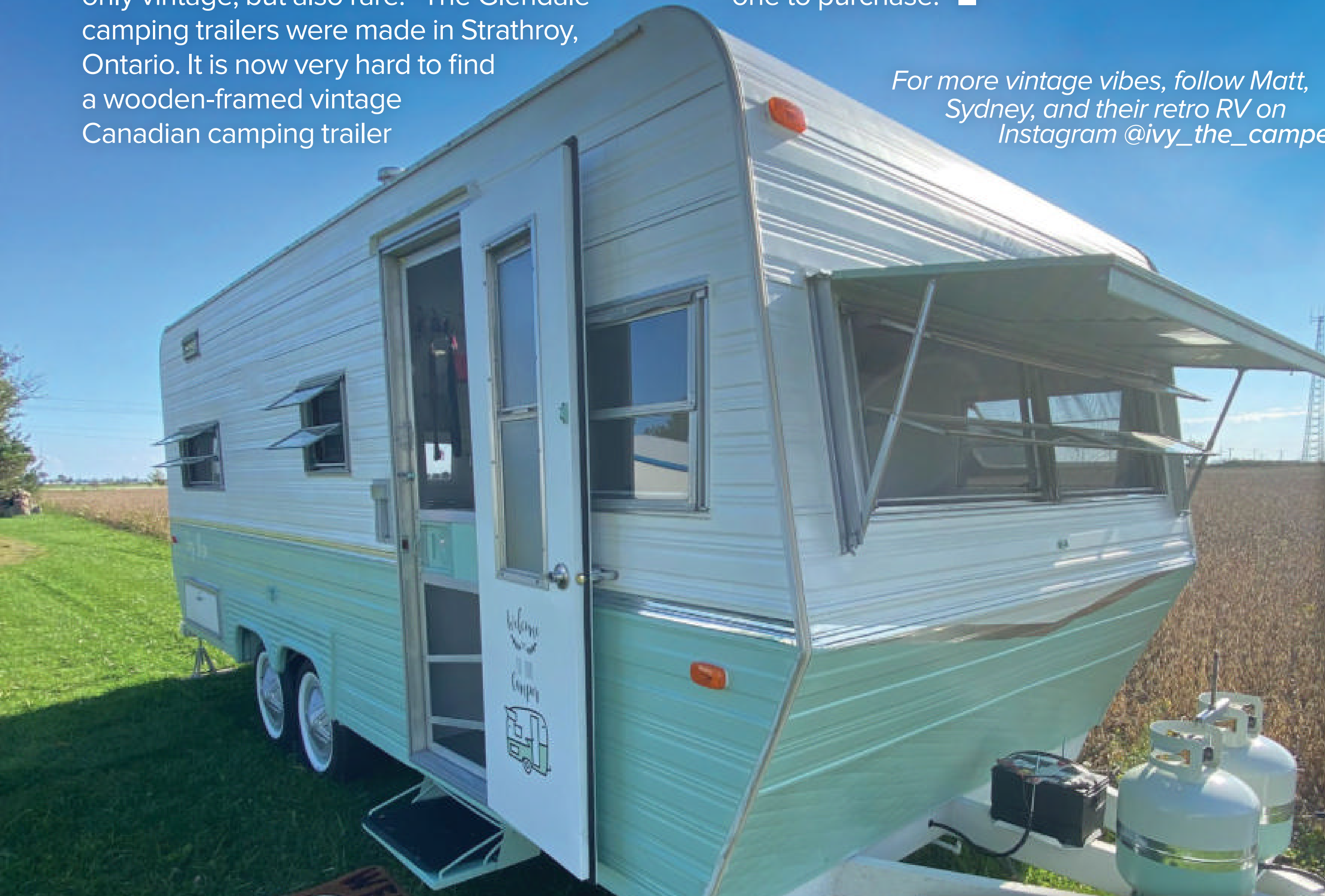
Matt Bray and Sydney Bibby were looking for a pandemic project when they found their 1977 Glendale Glendette, known affectionately as Ivy Rose. “We had our minds set on a vintage camper from the start,” they said. “We immediately fell in love with the charm, decor, and uniqueness that comes with owning a vintage camper compared to a newer rig.”

Since they purchased Ivy Rose in 2020, they’ve overhauled it from the inside out, choosing to restyle their trailer with a ’50s retro theme instead of sticking with the ’70s vibe. The family has been diligent about upkeep due to the trailer’s age, and one of their biggest restoration challenges was finding and repairing water leaks. The work was worth it—Glendale camping trailers are not only vintage, but also rare. “The Glendale camping trailers were made in Strathroy, Ontario. It is now very hard to find a wooden-framed vintage Canadian camping trailer in good condition that has withstood our harsh Canadian winters.”

As part-time travelers, Matt and Sydney were happy to be welcomed into the retro RV community. From vintage trailer clubs to vintage trailer owner and enthusiast events, they say the community is a huge bonus. “We love how our trailer sparks joy and conversations.” And expecting a good conversation is a must when it comes to owning a vintage rig—they confess that strangers often ask to take a peek inside their Glendale, and no matter what campground they visit, their trailer becomes a highlight.

For those looking to delve into the world of classics, Matt and Sydney warn that once you get started, it’s hard to stop. “This is a very addictive hobby. You will be always looking out for the next one to purchase!” ■

For more vintage vibes, follow Matt, Sydney, and their retro RV on Instagram @ivy_the_camper.



> “We love how our trailer sparks joy and conversations.”

How to CHOOSE a Generator

By Kevin Skelton

There are a lot of generators out there. With portables and built-ins, and power ratings ranging from 1,000 to 12,000 watts or more, choosing the right generator for your RV really depends on how big your RV is and what appliances you want to run.

Larger generators are usually built-ins. These are typically installed in large fifth wheels or motorhomes, and are commonly sized at 5,500 watts, but can be 8,000 watts or more. They can be started from a control panel inside the RV, and many of them even have smart controllers that can automatically start them if your batteries get low. Many larger RVs even have generator prep packages installed at the factory, so the install is pretty straightforward. Built-ins in fifth wheels typically burn propane, while in motorhomes, they usually draw from the main fuel tank and burn whatever type of fuel the motorhome uses.

Built-in generators are the ultimate in convenience. You have power for your RV at the push of a button and they are typically large enough to run multiple appliances. The Onan 8000, for instance, can power anything you need in a large RV. However, that convenience usually comes with the largest price tag, and they can also be loud and thirsty. Onan states that their 5,500-watt generator consumes almost a gallon of gasoline every hour when run at its max load. That means if you want to run two air conditioners off of this common built-in, you'll be using a gallon of gasoline per hour. Propane models use even more, and aren't very efficient for just running small appliances.

Portable generators are almost always smaller and less expensive. You usually start them with a pull cord and connect your RV power cord to it. They're often stored in the bed of a truck or in an outdoor storage compartment on a motorhome, and they also come in a variety of sizes. A 2,000-watt portable generator typically weighs about 50 pounds and is the size of a small suitcase. These can get six to eight hours of use per gallon of gasoline, and many can be converted to run on propane, so they're a good option if you just need to keep your fridge or other small appliances running. 3,000-watt models are also very popular, as they can run a single large appliance at a time (air conditioner, microwave, etc.) and are still pretty fuel efficient. Another option is two 2,000- or 2,200-watt portables, as many of them have the ability to run in parallel. That means you can run one for the best fuel efficiency when you don't need a lot of power, or connect two of them together for more power. Most portable generators are quiet, but avoid the open frame, construction-style ones—they are very loud, and even if you can stand the noise, your neighbors won't be happy!

There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to portable versus built-in generators. If your RV has the space to support it and you are looking for ease of use, consider a built-in. If you are looking to save money and weight or just want something smaller, portables may be your best bet. ■

Kevin and his family's travels can be found on Instagram @_neverstopadventuring.

MORE GENERATOR OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

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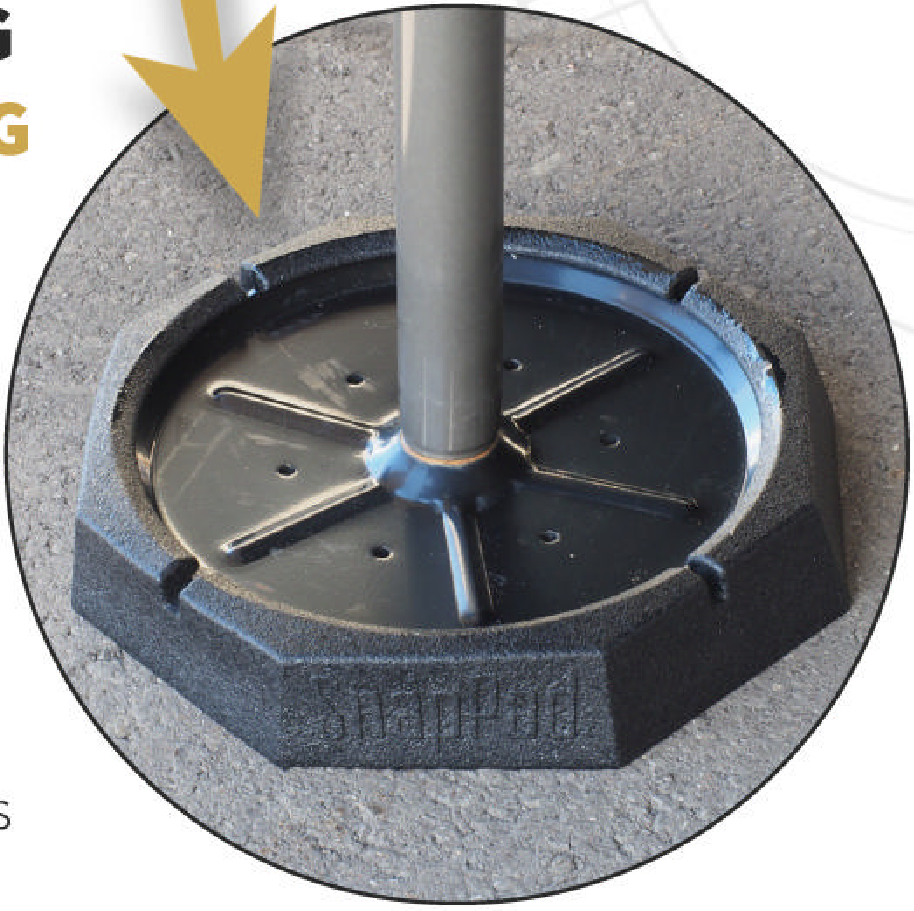

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Digging INTO DETROIT

By Anne Klumpp

It doesn't matter how much time or how many miles we put between ourselves and our home state of Michigan; we will always have a place in our hearts (and our stomachs) for the Mitten State. While we love traveling and exploring new places, especially through local food and beverage, visiting the Detroit area and having a chance to eat some local Detroit foods feels like a warm embrace from an old friend. If you want to eat like a local when visiting Michigan, and particularly the Detroit area, don't miss a chance to try these delicious and iconic foods.

CONEY DOGS While it's not that uncommon to find chili dogs on menus, it's rare to find coney dogs—and especially a Detroit coney dog. While all coney dogs are chili dogs, not all chili dogs are coneys. Served in a basic steamed white bun, the best Detroit coney dogs are made using hot dogs with a natural casing. When you bite into a natural-casing hot dog, a distinctive snap releases the hot dog's juicy, garlicky, meaty flavors. Coney sauce is made with ground beef, beef heart, and beef suet, but it usually comes in a paste or puree form, and is seasoned with chili powder, tomatoes, mustard, and other seasonings. **Lafayette Coney Island** and **American Coney Island** in downtown Detroit are the neighboring institutions widely renowned for Detroit-style coney dogs, but you'll find coney islands or diners serving up these concoctions all over the area, including the **Anchor Bay Pit Stop** in New Baltimore.

Bay Pit Stop

GREEK SALAD Even if coney dogs aren't your thing, the experience of a coney island restaurant is a must while you're in the area! Most of these places are essentially diners or family restaurants, and their basic menus offer coney dogs, burgers, soups, sandwiches, and salads. Greek salad is one of my favorite things to order from these local diners. I am disappointed when I order a Greek salad and the server asks what kind of salad dressing I want. I want to scream, "What do you mean? I want Greek dressing!" In the Detroit area, Greek dressing comes in two forms—a creamy version, and a red wine vinaigrette with lots of oregano. Both have a hint of sweetness that pairs perfectly with the lettuce, tomato, red onion, Kalamata olives, pepperoncini, sliced beets, and feta that make up the rest of the salad. I've never been disappointed by the Greek salad at **Nicky D.'s** in Royal Oak.

Jonna's Bar and Grill

Buddy's
RESTAURANT PIZZERIA
BAR
Buddy's
PIZZERIA

DETRIOT-STYLE PIZZA If you think Detroiters take coney dogs and Greek salads seriously, it's time to talk pizza! Knowing Michigan is the birthplace of Little Caesars, Domino's, and Hungry Howie's pizza chains might convince you that pizza is in our blood. While you can get these chains' pizzas almost anywhere around the country, authentic Detroit-style pizza can be difficult to find. **Buddy's** made Detroit-style pizza famous—it's a thick, square, pan-crisped crust that tastes fried on the edges, topped with distinctive Wisconsin brick cheese, thick, slightly sweet tomato sauce, and toppings like pepperoni. You can find locations for Buddy's Pizza around the state, but many other local restaurants offer these square pies.

Anita's Kitchen

Phoenicia

Our favorite is **Green Lantern Pizza,** but we found **Jonna's Bar and Grill** in New Hudson was also on point!

BOTANA Detroiters have also put a unique spin on Mexican food. When you read the word botana on a menu in other cities, it's usually heading up a section of appetizers. Here, botana indicates a single layer of warm corn chips topped with protein, veggies, and melted Muenster cheese. **Armando's restaurant** in Detroit began serving this dish around 1975, and other Mexican restaurants in the area have adopted it for their menus. We love the bean and beef botana from **El Charro,** which has multiple locations. Their botana has layers of warm tortilla chips, refried beans flavored with chorizo, seasoned ground beef, melted cheese, green pepper, onion, tomato, green olives, and sliced avocado. I know it sounds like I'm just describing nachos, but a Detroit botana isn't just a pile of chips with toppings thrown on top—each chip comes loaded with just the right amount of toppings for the perfect bite!

ARABIC FOOD We never realized how culturally diverse Detroit is until we found ourselves living in places with less diversity. Detroit's automotive industry brought immigrants from all over the world, especially from Arab countries. It's estimated that more than 40% of Detroiters are of Arab descent. Arabic food is so ubiquitous here that many area gas stations offer mouth-watering shawarma and falafel sandwiches. But if you're skeptical about gas station food, you'll find plenty of other places to savor Middle Eastern fare, especially Lebanese cuisine. If you're looking for a relatively inexpensive but tasty meal, try **La Shish** in Dearborn or **Anita's Kitchen** in Ferndale. If you want high-end Lebanese food, try **Phoenicia** in Birmingham, or its sister restaurant, **Leila,** in Detroit. Eating at any of these restaurants will give you a new understanding of how sublimely creamy hummus can be.

MAURICE SALAD Another Detroit classic is the Maurice salad, which has crisp iceberg lettuce and julienned turkey, ham, and Swiss cheese tossed in a creamy dressing and garnished with sliced sweet gherkins and pimento-stuffed green olives. This salad graced the restaurant menu of the J. L. Hudson Company department store beginning in the 1930s and through the local department store's many changes of ownership. Today, you can order a Maurice salad at Detroit-area **Macy's store** restaurants, and you'll find it on restaurant menus around town, including at **M29 Diner** in Ira Township.

Maurice Salad

El Charro

DOUBLE-BAKED RYE BREAD Detroit will probably not be top of mind when you think about delis, but the Detroit area lays claim to double-baked rye bread, the type of rye used in top delicatessens in the country. The bread was created in the 1960s by Jack Goldberg, the founder of **Stage Deli** in Detroit, which is now located in West Bloomfield. Goldberg ordered his rye bread from the baker 80% baked. He finished the bake onsite, offering his customers a sandwich made on fresh bread. This process yields a crisp-crusted, soft-centered bread perfect for deli sandwiches—I suggest a Reuben. You'll find this type of rye bread at most area cafes and delis, including **Cove Café** in Fair Haven, MI.

LAKE FISH In Michigan, you are never more than six miles from a body of water or 85 miles from one of the Great Lakes, so it should be no surprise that lake fish, specifically whitefish, walleye, and yellow perch, can be found on many restaurant menus. Perch is what you'll find most often in Detroit—these small filets have a very mild flavor and are typically pan-sauteed or deep-fried and served with tartar sauce. Call it a local version of fish and chips! We found a great deal at **Off the Hook Sports Grill** in Ira Township, where a pound of perch with fries and a salad fed the two of us.

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Cove Café

Off the Hook Sports Grill

Lake St Clair

Follow Anne's food and RV journey on Instagram @ontheroadofadventure.

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER INTO THE CITY WITH THESE FOODS AND DRINKS:

- **Zip Sauce** If you order a steak in a Detroit-owned steakhouse, don't be surprised if it comes with zip sauce, a steak sauce with butter, Worcestershire, and beef base made famous by Lelli's Steakhouse beginning in 1939.

- **Potato Chips** Michigan is the leading producer of potatoes that are used to make potato chips. As such, you'll find several locally-made potato chip brands, including **Better Made.**

- **Pickles** As the top grower of pickle cucumbers, Michigan is home to many pickle companies, including **McClure's.** Enjoy a Detroit Dirty Martini, made with Detroit-distilled **Valentine Vodka** and pickle brine, and finished with a McClure's pickle spear.

- **Sanders Hot Fudge Dessert** menus and ice cream stands in the Detroit area often feature Sanders hot fudge. Dating back to 1875, this is a classic ice cream topping in the region.

- **Vernors Ginger Ale and Faygo** You can find these sodas in other states, but their home is in Michigan. Detroit pharmacist James Vernor created Vernors ginger ale, which made its debut in 1866. And in 1907, Russian immigrant bakers who wanted to convert their frosting flavors into sodas started Faygo. Today, Faygo comes in fifty flavors of pop. (Yup! You are in Michigan, where soda is called pop!)

- **Wine** With more than 140 wineries, Michigan is the seventh-largest producer of wines in the country. The most notable wineries are in northwest Michigan, but you can find Michigan wines for sale on restaurant menus and in stores across the state. In metro Detroit, you can taste Michigan wines at one of Michigan By the Bottle's three locations.

- **Beer** We see Founders and Bell's beers all across the country as we travel, but you'll find many other craft breweries in Michigan, ranked sixth in the nation for the number of brewers. ■

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Family Aims for Warmth, Softness in Part-time Reno

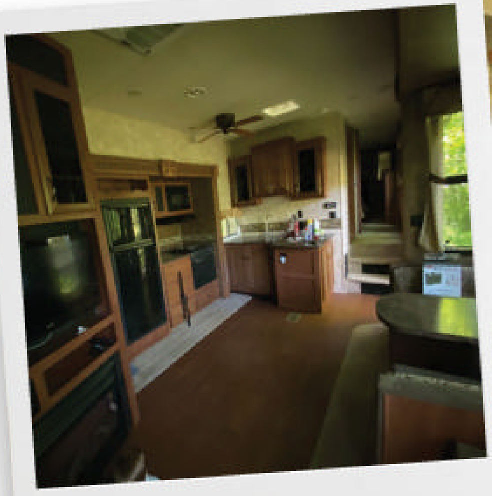
By Marike van Niekerk

We are Ben, Marike, and Ciaran van Niekerk, plus Oscar the cat—also known as The Roaming Vans. We are roaming indeed, as we are originally from South Africa, lived in Ireland for several years, where Ciaran was born, and are now in New England and ready for more adventures.

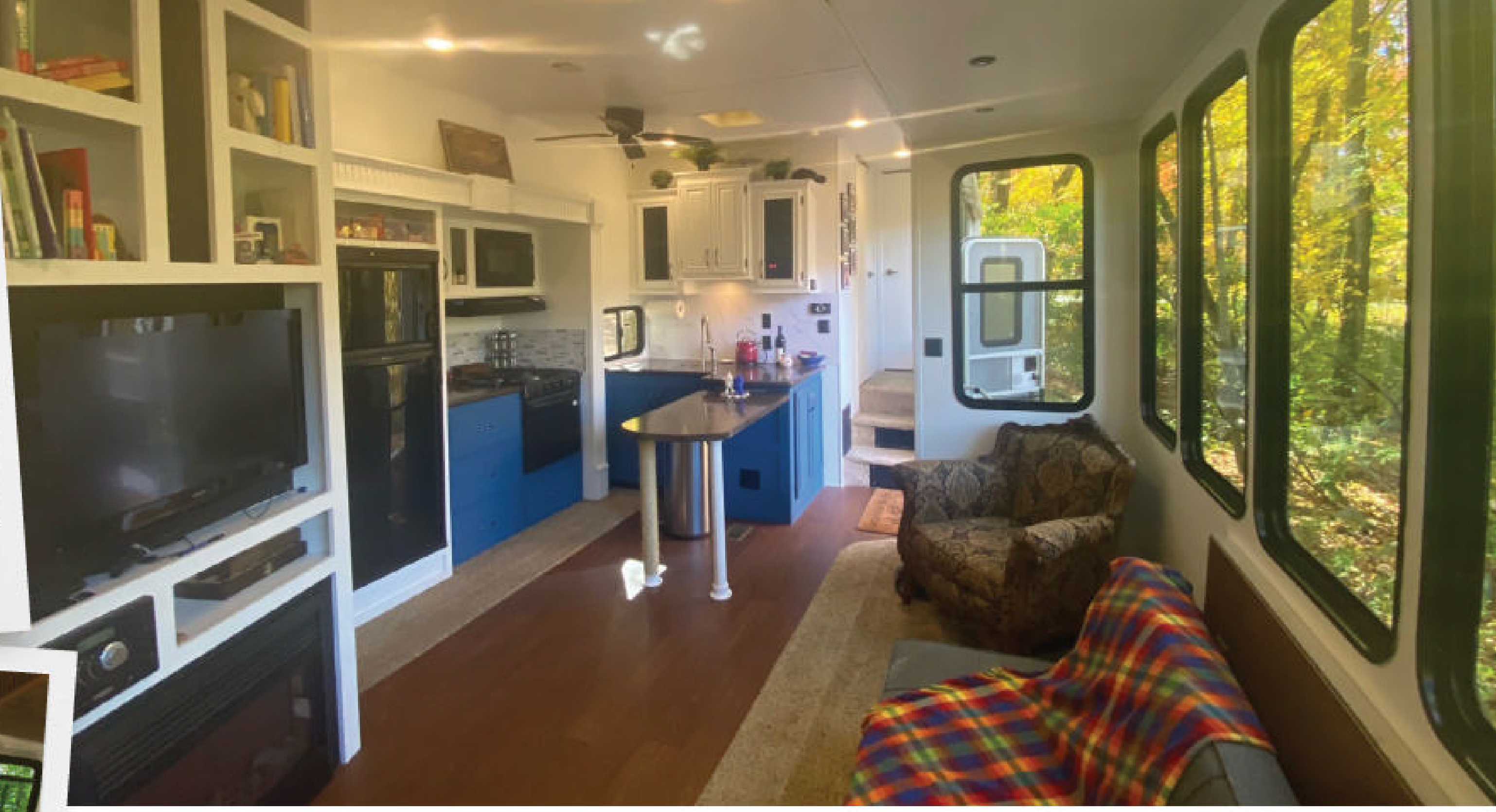
We have a 2014 Forest River Sierra, and she is a beauty! When we decided to RV full time, we started by looking at what was non-negotiable to make it work. We needed a room for ourselves, a room so Ciaran could have his own space, a space for me and Ben to work and study, and enough space overall that we could comfortably entertain, as we have family and friends all over the world who plan to visit. So we decided to go big rather than small, and were looking for a bunkhouse or toy hauler.

We looked at an Open Range that was partially renovated, but it failed an inspection, so we decided not to go through with the purchase. We highly recommend an inspection to anyone purchasing a used RV—it cost us $800 but saved thousands of dollars in the long run.

A few days later, Ben saw our toy hauler for sale on RV Trader, and it was only three miles from where we were staying. It was in immaculate condition and ticked all our boxes—plus it had the bonus of a half bath ensuite to the bunkhouse, as well as an awesome outside kitchen and gas barbeque. We were able to moochdock with friends and start renovations immediately. Ben is a pilot, so he is away for several days at a time, and Ciaran wasn't in daycare for a few months, so the renovations started

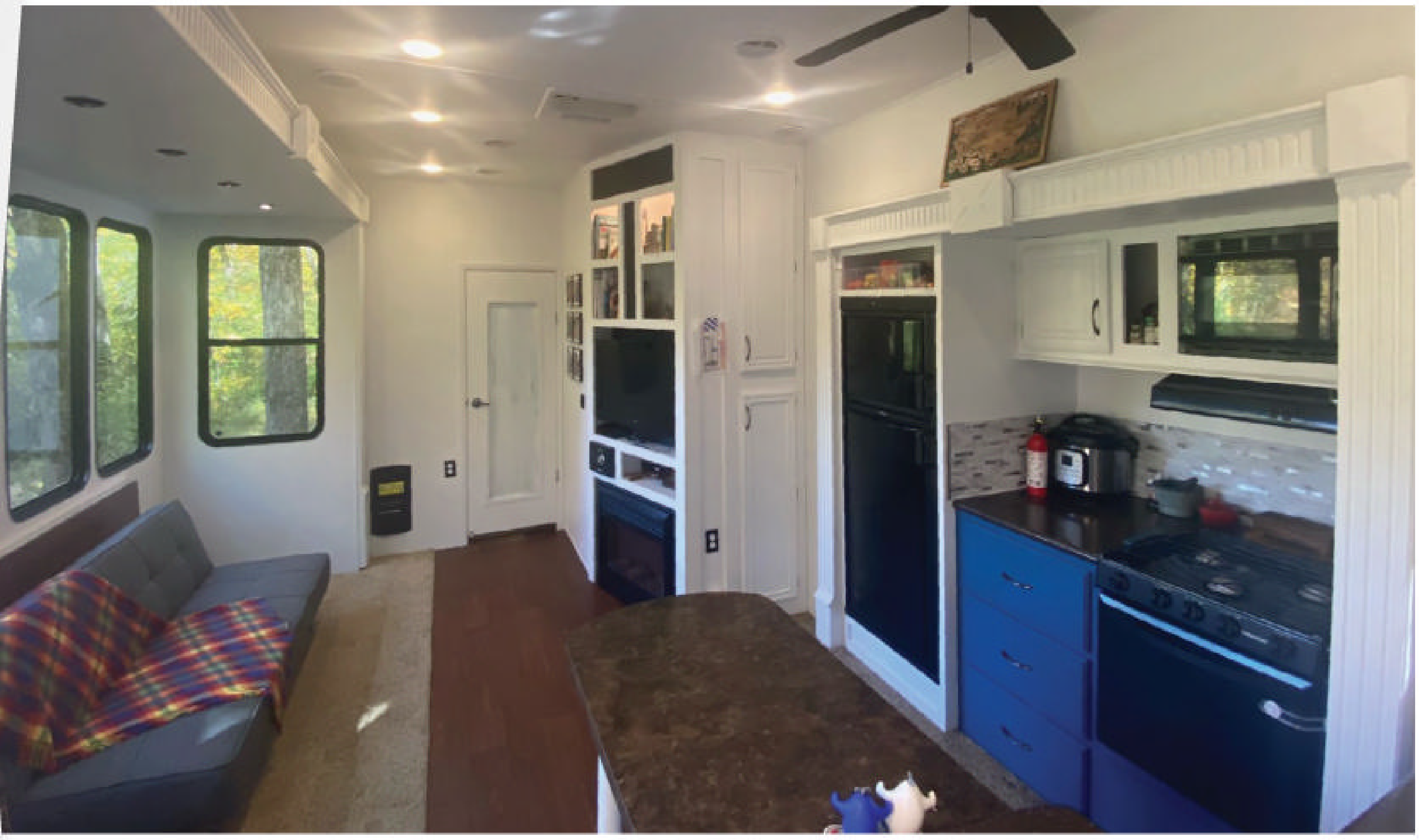


before



in progress

in progress



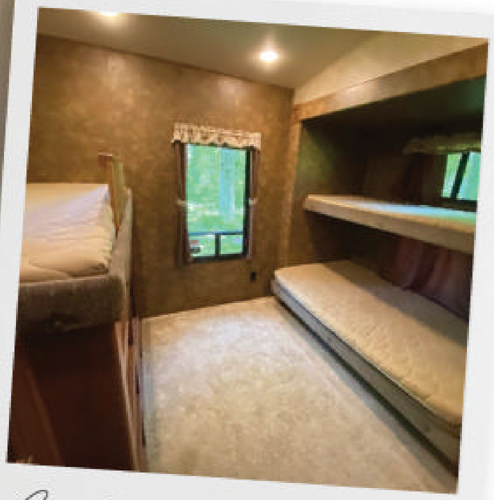
in earnest in early June.

We decided to completely renovate the kitchen, master bedroom, and bathroom first and complete the bunkhouse/office renovation once we moved in. Ben and I are both experienced DIYers, so we were confident we could do most, if not all, of the project ourselves. We consulted with RV Fixer Upper before we started, and we're so glad we did—their advice was very straightforward and saved us time and money. They said the smartest time to ask for advice is before starting, not after you've made a couple of mistakes. We bought their buyer's guide as well, which was also money well spent. We follow a lot of RV renovation accounts on Instagram and YouTube, and have gotten an idea for what we like and what we would like to implement in our own home.

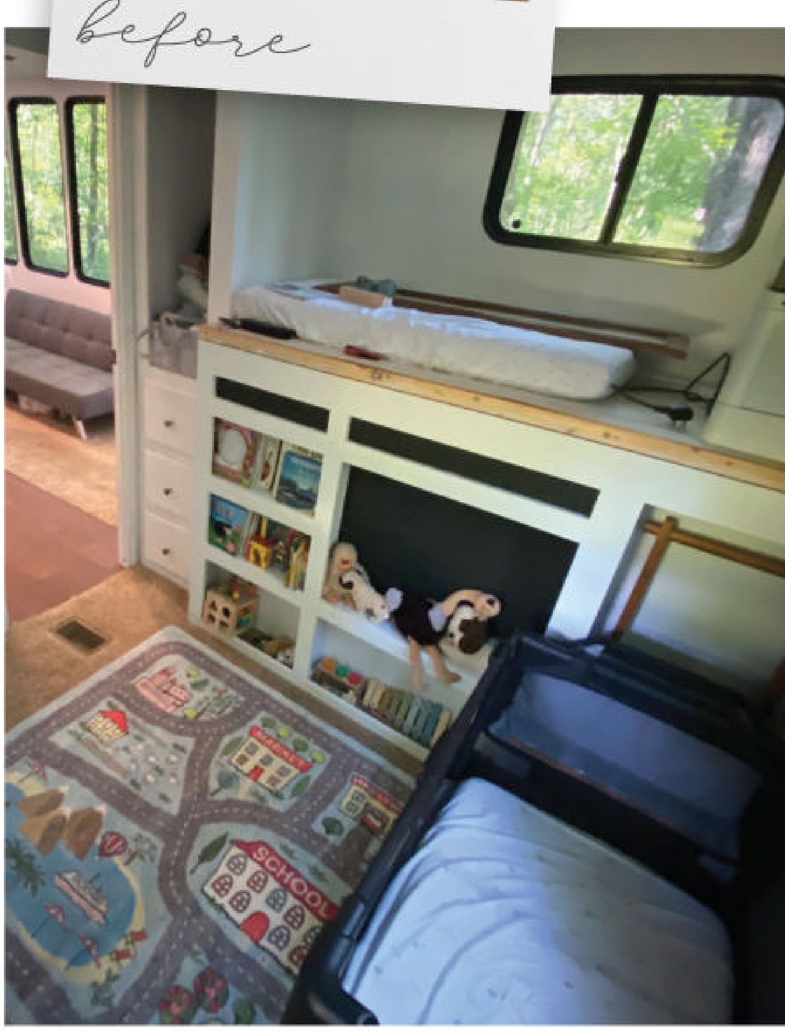
Every RV pre-2015 looks like the dark inside of a sandy cave, and I get the appeal of recliners, but they sure aren't cuddle-in-front-of-the-fireplace friendly! We wanted our toy hauler to feel like a home, not a camper, so we drew inspiration from what we had in our previous homes.

The most fun part was the initial gutting. We removed all the original built-in furniture, throwing out the awful couch and mattress and taking off all the doors and hardware. Then came the pain of sanding down all the cabinets and woodwork—soul destroying, but very necessary. Then we (finally!) painted. We found the all-white color palette a bit cold and decided to add a pop of color in our kitchen cabinets, which was inspired by our kitchen in Ireland. This also helped define the space. Ben used the existing dining nook table to create a kitchen island that increases the workspace for food preparation and doubles as a dining area. We left the carpets and flooring alone for now.

before



before



We moved into the RV once the primary bedroom and living area were completed, and then we started on the bunkhouse, which we wanted to turn into a shared nursery and office space. We removed the bunks from the slide and removed all the unnecessary hardware. The top bunk was the perfect surface for a desk built into the slide, so we flipped it upside down and worked beading into the walls, and the desk simply sits on the beading. Unfortunately, Ben used the same screws from the one-inch square tubing of the bunk to screw the half-inch beading into the slide—yes, the screws went straight through the slide! Luckily, it was an easy fix.

Then, as we were cleaning the walls, I noticed a wobble in one of the panels. Somehow, during the heavy rains of the previous few months, a small leak had developed in a seal around one of the brake lights. We had to rip out the offensive panels and all the insulation. Once everything was dry, we faced the long and complicated process of washing, sanding, and re-laminating the rear wall. Once that was done, we replaced the cut-out panel and could finally finish painting the office/nursery!

After three months of part-time renovating, we were finally done with the most basic bones of our home! We have a primary bedroom, a lounge, a lovely kitchen, and an office/nursery, and this is where we are for now!

The next, and most exciting, steps on our journey will be to start interior decorating to add softness, warmth, and privacy. Ciaran's permanent bed also needs to be built on the top bunk. We look forward to taking the Roaming Van on her maiden journey! ■

For more on Marike's journey, follow her on Instagram @theroamingvans.

ON THE MENU

TAPATIO
SALSA PICANTE
Hot Sauce
10 FL. OZ. - 296 mL

THE BEST
GRILLING
COOKBOOK
Ever Written by Two Idiots
RYAN FEY
Grill Dads
MARK ANDERSON

Adapted with permission from ***The Best Grilling Cookbook Ever Written by Two Idiots*** *by Ryan Fey and Mark Anderson. Page Street Publishing Co. 2022. Photo credit: Ken Goodman.*

Better Than Buffalo Chicken Wings

Serves: 4 to 6 | Prep Time: 24 hours | Cook Time: 90 minutes

This is no dig on the actual wings from Buffalo (which are just called wings there). We're talking about the wings at thousands of sports bars around the country. They're soggy, sad, and fried in the same oil as the fish and chips—gross. We dry brine these wings, smoke them to render out excess fat and provide some smoke flavor, grill them for an epic char, then pan fry them for skin so crispy it breaks like glass. And the sauce? The perfect combo of sweet and heat.

For the wings

3 pounds (1.4 kg) chicken wings, split into flats and drumettes
Kosher salt, for seasoning
Black pepper, for seasoning
1 tablespoon (8 g) cornstarch
2 teaspoons (9 g) baking soda
2 tablespoons (30 ml) avocado oil

For the ranch crema

1/2 cup (120 ml) crema
1/4 cup (60 ml) buttermilk
1/4 cup (12 g) finely-chopped chives
1/4 cup (15 g) finely-chopped fresh parsley
1 clove garlic, minced
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper

For the hot honey sauce

1/2 cup (120 ml) light honey
1/3 cup (80 ml) hot sauce (Tapatío, Texas Pete, or Crystal)
4 cloves garlic, minced
4 tablespoons (56 g) salted butter, at room temperature

Instructions: A day before you plan to eat them, generously season the wings on both sides with kosher salt and black pepper. Spread the wings out on a drying rack set inside a rimmed baking sheet. Combine the cornstarch and baking soda in a small bowl, then use a fine-mesh strainer to dust the mixture onto both sides of the wings. Chill the wings uncovered for 24 hours.

You can make the ranch crema just before serving or a day in advance. Combine the crema, buttermilk, chives, parsley, garlic, kosher salt, and black pepper in a medium bowl. Whisk to combine, then cover and chill for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Set a smoker or grill for smoking at low, about 250° (120°C). We like cherry or a blend for this. Smoke the wings directly on the grates until they reach 150° (65°C), roughly 60 minutes. Remove the wings from the grill and set the grill to medium-high heat, about 450° (230°C). Return the wings to the grill over direct heat for about 2 minutes per side—your goal is a good char. Move the wings off the grill and mix up the sauce by combining the honey, hot sauce, garlic, and butter in a small bowl.

The next step is to get those wings nice and crispy. Heat a wok over medium-high heat (this can be done on the grill, the stovetop, or the side burner, if you've got it). When the wok is hot, add the avocado oil, followed directly by the wings. The trick here is to keep the wok and wings moving. As soon as the skin on the wings begins to bubble, add the sauce mixture and keep tossing until the sauce has thickened. Immediately remove the wings from the wok onto a cooling rack—this will keep them crisp while they cool enough to pick up.

If you're camping with your Ninja Woodfire Outdoor Grill, skip the pan frying and instead crisp the wings for five minutes on the Air Crisp setting at 450°.

Serve the wings hot with the cool crema for dipping. ■

NINJA
WOODFIRE
HI 2000

Ninja Woodfire Outdoor Grill
Get the most out of the grilling season by adding a Ninja Woodfire Outdoor Grill to your collection of RV toys.

From Keystone TO Airstream

ONE FAMILY REIMAGINES RV RENOVATIONS

By Lindsay Thompson

We are the Thompsons, a traveling family of four who sold it all in 2020 and hit the road full time in 2021.

We started our journey in a 2021 Keystone Outback that we fully renovated and transformed from a trailer to a tiny home in about six weeks. Before we even purchased it, we knew we would renovate it to suit our needs and personal tastes, so we wasted no time tearing into that project.

After traveling and living in that 40-foot space, we started to notice we lacked flexibility. We began exploring options to downsize, and an opportunity to purchase an Airstream fell into our laps.

We sold the Outback and began completely re-imagining the Airstream, which was a perfect blank slate. We wanted a bold color scheme and a bit of a throwback vibe, but what we wanted most was a functional living space in just 27 feet! I think it's clear that we don't have a defined style—I like to incorporate what sparks joy. I like breaking the traditional "rules" and going against the grain whenever possible. You'll find natural elements in my designs, as well as the use of color.

We spent three months building out our Airstream, and everything is new except the exterior skin! My husband, Stewart, has extensive knowledge in construction, so we work together and he brings my visions to life. We have a unique ability to work creatively with each other and relate to beautiful spaces. ■

*For more on Lindsay and her family's adventures, visit **@livingsmalldreamingbig** on Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok.*

> “I think it’s clear that we don’t have a defined style—I like to incorporate what sparks joy.”

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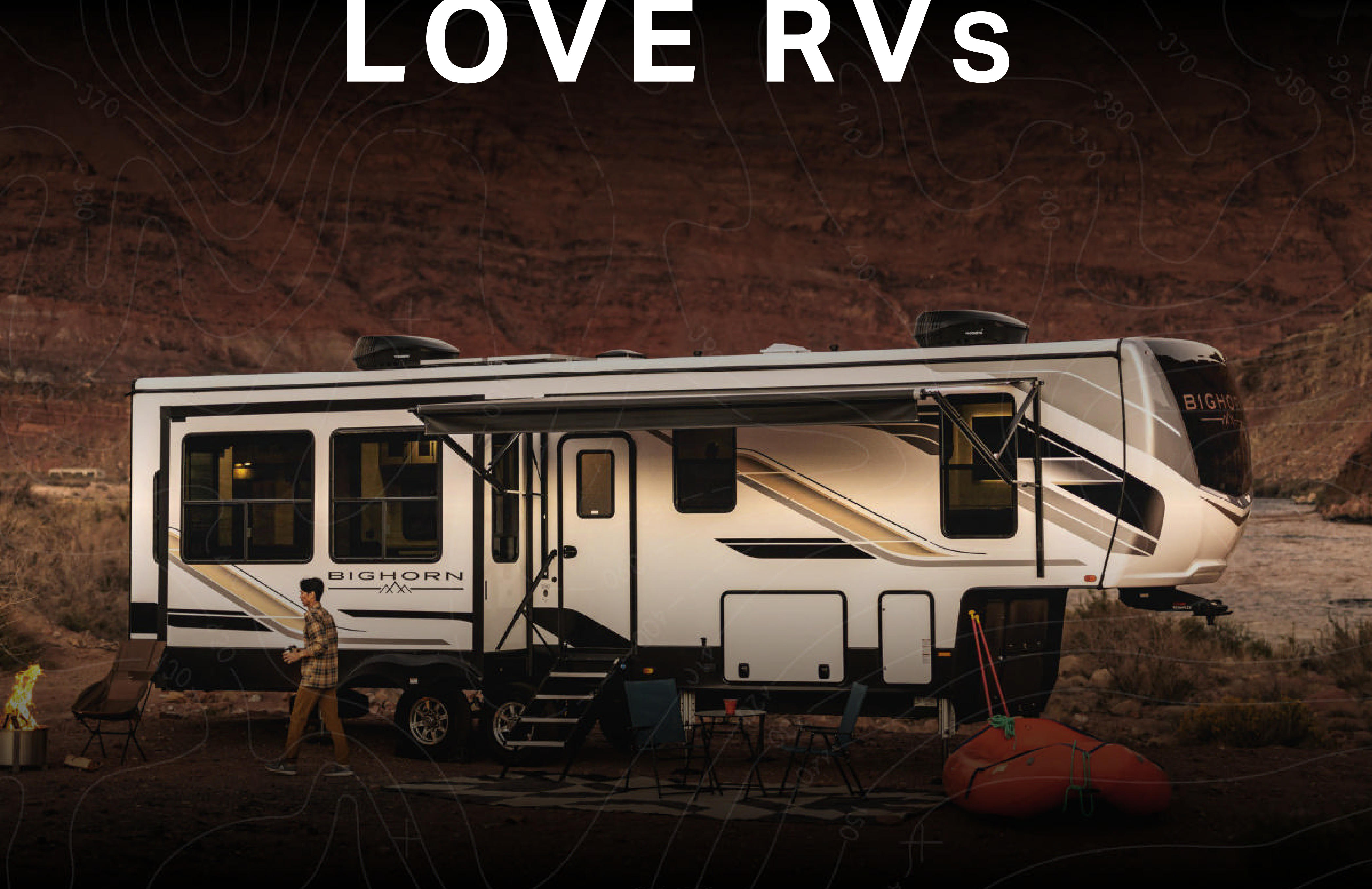

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Places TO See & Stay

Whether you're venturing out for a cross-country road trip or exploring locally, here are some famous and unique must-stop places to see and stay across America!

Attractions

Campgrounds

Information

Harvest Hosts

*Harvest Hosts locations and reviews generously provided by the team at Harvest Hosts. Visit **harvesthosts.com** for a 15% off discount.*

COST

$	Up to $30 / night
$$	$31-$60 / night
$$$	$61+ / night

*Have a place to see and/or stay? Visit **rvtoday.com/work-with-us** and click the Campground or Attractions form to share your favorite road trip spots!*

FAST FACTS

- Full Hookups
- Big Rig Friendly
- Kid-friendly
- Pet-friendly
- Pool
- Wi-Fi

Pacific

Blue Heron French Cheese Company
AIRSTREAM

HARVEST HOSTS

BLUE HERON FRENCH CHEESE COMPANY

2001 Blue Heron Road A, Tillamook, OR 97141

There is something here for the entire family! Sample cheese from all over the world, try gourmet foods, taste Oregon's finest wines, or wander through the unique gift store. They even have a petting farm to entertain the little ones. If you're looking for a fantastic place to eat lunch, try the Blue Heron Deli, with freshly baked bread and homemade soups and salads.

This bustling location has 15 parking spots and accommodates large rigs. Harvest Hosts members gush about the cheese and practically guarantee that you'll leave happy and well-fed.

MINES DANGER

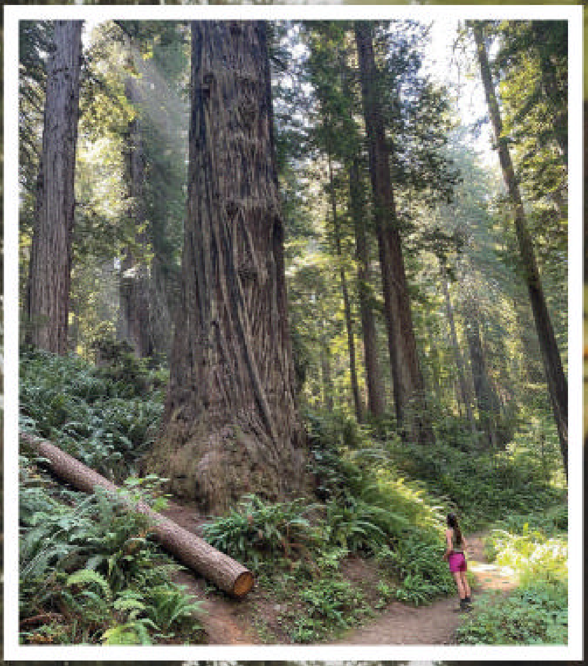
ELMER'S BOTTLE TREE RANCH

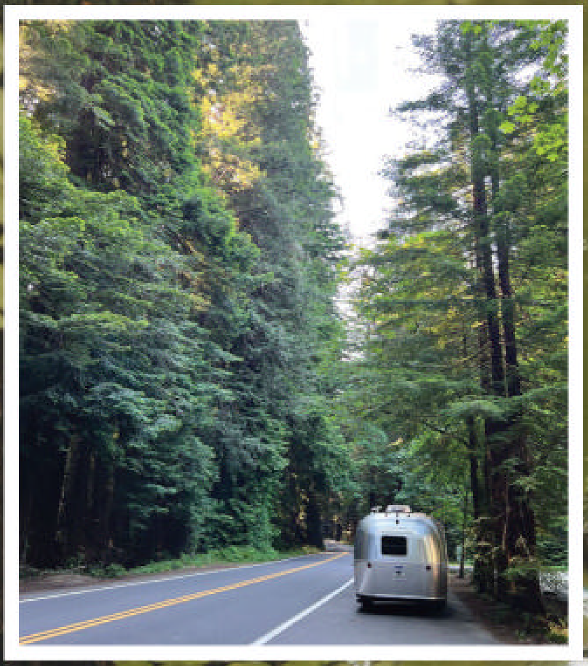
24266 National Trails Highway
Oro Grande, CA 92368

Interested in an unusual roadside stop? Check out Elmer's Bottle Tree Ranch off Route 66, where a different type of forest—one made up of bottle trees—can be seen!

Elmer Long started his collection as a kid. When he and his father went camping, they would pick up bottles, rakes, and more, and he crafted this collection into a work of art. Elmer passed away in 2019, but the Bottle Tree Ranch is open for visitors, with Elmer's creativity on full display. This unique attraction is a great addition to any Route 66 road trip.

Photos contributed by Cathy Zhang @cathywhoooooo





? Do you know the difference between redwoods and sequoias?

The differences primarily come down to size and shape. Redwoods are taller with a thinner trunk, whereas sequoias have a massive trunk and are the largest trees per volume in the world.

REDWOOD NATIONAL AND STATE PARKS

Redwood trees are protected by a national park and state parks. These majestic trees are the tallest in the world, growing to be more than 300 feet tall. They are also some of the oldest trees, with some dating back 2,000 years.

Visitors can wander through the old-growth forests, but be sure to take in more than just the famous giants! According to the National Park Service, the parks "also protect vast prairies, oak woodlands, wild rivers, and 40 miles of rugged coastline."

*Photos contributed by Evan Lanier **@evanlanier**, Hannah Huber **@hannahchuber**, Mark Hertzler **@crazycripplecouple***

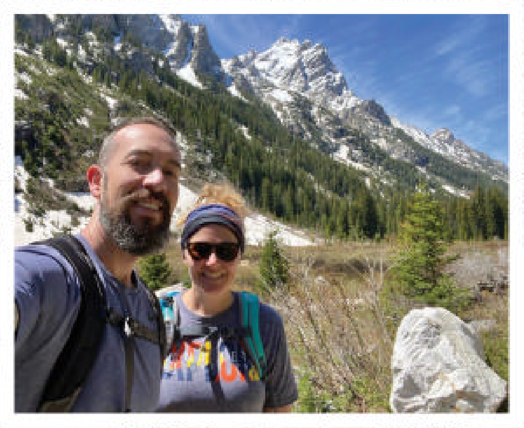
Mountain

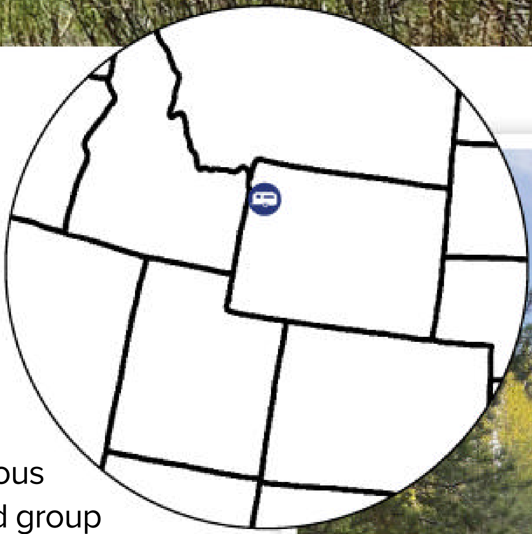
D.H. LESCOMBES WINERY AND TASTING ROOM

7075 Highway 549 SE, Deming, NM 88030

At D.H. Lescombes Winery and Tasting Room in Deming, you can tour New Mexico's largest winery, where Florent, Emmanuel, and Hervé Lescombes produce award-winning wines. Deming, New Mexico, home to pure water and fast ducks, offers many attractions, including museums, state parks, and historical locations.

Harvest Hosts members rave about the ample parking (plenty of room for large rigs) and how late the tasting room is open. The winery serves a limited food menu and often hosts bands on Friday nights. The atmosphere is top-notch, and we hear the wines are, too!





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COLTER BAY CAMPGROUND

100 Colter Bay Campground Road
Moran, WY 83013

We absolutely love Colter Bay for its location and nearby amenities.

Within the campground, you'll find spacious pull-through sites, hiker and biker sites, and group sites. Each site has a picnic table, fire ring, and bear box. The sites mostly have no hookups, though there are a few with electricity. The campground offers restrooms with flush toilets and camp sinks, as well as two dump stations with potable water. There's also a gas station outside the campground.

Our site (H157) was at the end of a loop, and it gave us full sun for our solar panels, along with a huge front yard with forest views.

Colter Bay Village is nearby, with a visitor center, a gift shop, restaurants, laundry, showers, a food market, and a marina. Jackson Lake is a short walk from most parts of the campground. Colter Bay is also a great location from which to explore Yellowstone National Park. This was definitely one of our favorite places we've ever stayed!

Contributed by Missy Late @mandtinmt

HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK

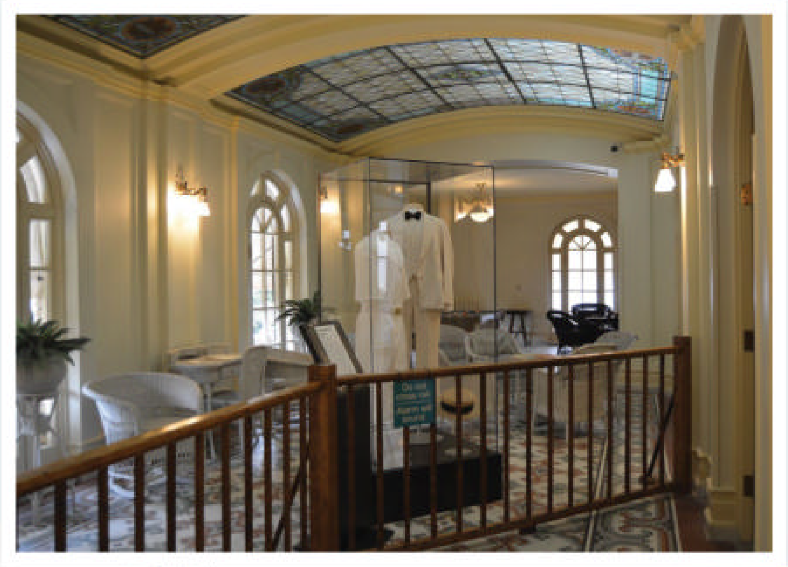
Close to Catherine's Landing RV Resort and Campground is the town of Hot Springs, which is nestled in the Ouachita Mountains.

This location comes with an interesting history and natural beauty. We found plenty to do, from hiking the many great trails in the national park to learning about the bathhouse history and gangster influence. Most people come here to bathe in the soothing warm mineral waters, but there is also a horse racetrack, a science museum, an off-road track, a water/theme park, an alligator farm, and a few museums. The town of Hot Springs is very dog-friendly as well—we found many places that would allow dogs in and on the patio for lunch.

Contributed by Nancy Walters @rvagogo

DO NOT TOUCH

Visitor Center
Hot Springs National Park



Hot Springs
National Park
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

$$$

CATHERINE'S LANDING RV RESORT AND CAMPGROUND

1700 Shady Grove Road, Hot Springs, AR 71901

Catherine's Landing is a great RV park set on 400 acres with one mile bordering Lake Catherine. All roads, sites, and patios are paved, and it's definitely big rig friendly. Every site has water, 50/30-amp electric, sewer, cable, and Wi-Fi. Fire pits and picnic tables accompany all sites, too. There are a variety of sites, including waterfront back-ins, pull-throughs, and interior back-ins. Waterfront sites have a nice view of the lake and access for fishing. The park also has yurts and cottages (some of which are pet-friendly). Adjacent to the yurts is a nice, large covered picnic area with grills and a dishwashing station.

Because this park is an RVC Outdoor Destination property, it's known for "resort" amenities, including a swimming pool, a fitness center, a lounge, a playground, a dog park, a zipline, boat rentals, a boat launch, hiking trails, a store, and disc golf. Some amenities (including boat rentals and zipline) are an extra charge.

Contributed by Nancy Walters @rvagogo

HARVEST HOSTS

PALS BREWING COMPANY

4520 South Buffalo Bill Ave., North Platte, NE 69101

Situated on four beautiful acres, Pals Taproom and Outdoor Beer Oasis is the perfect spot to relax while enjoying locally-handcrafted brews. Their beer is produced onsite in small batches, so they are always fresh and flavorful. With specialty pizzas and hors d'oeuvres, arriving on an empty stomach is not a problem. Though Pals is an active brewery, the location is kid-friendly and even offers a two-acre outdoor area fully loaded with picnic tables, a sandbox, a volleyball court, and lawn games. Leashed pets are welcome, too!

Pals Brewing Company is a perfect stop-through location in close proximity to the highway, making it clear why it's a favorite of Harvest Hosts members. They even accept same-day requests (through the exclusive Harvest Hosts Request-A-Stay system) and accommodate rigs larger than 45 feet. Talk about flexibility and space to roam!

HARVEST HOSTS
Do Not Block Entrance

Pals
Pals
Pals
Pals
Jerry
Rasberry
Irish

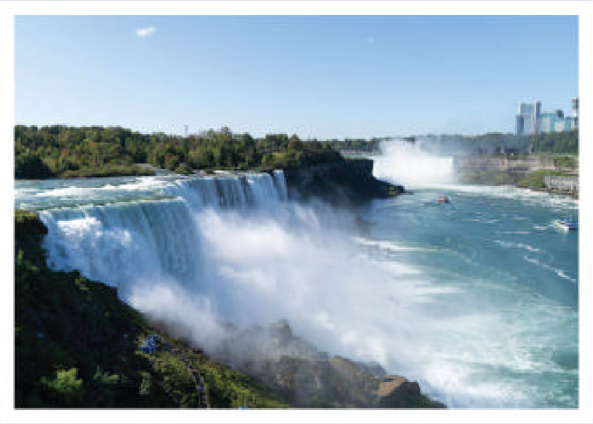
NIAGARA FALLS

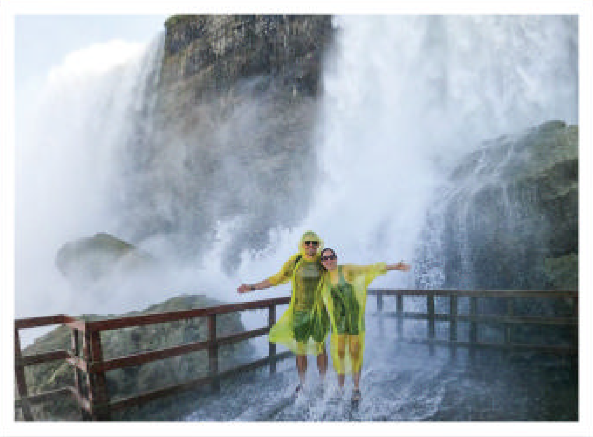
Niagara Falls is a natural wonder that can only be fully appreciated in person. Made up of three waterfalls—American Falls, Bridal Veil Falls, and Horseshoe Falls—Niagara is between the border of America and Canada, allowing each country to offer different spectacular views.

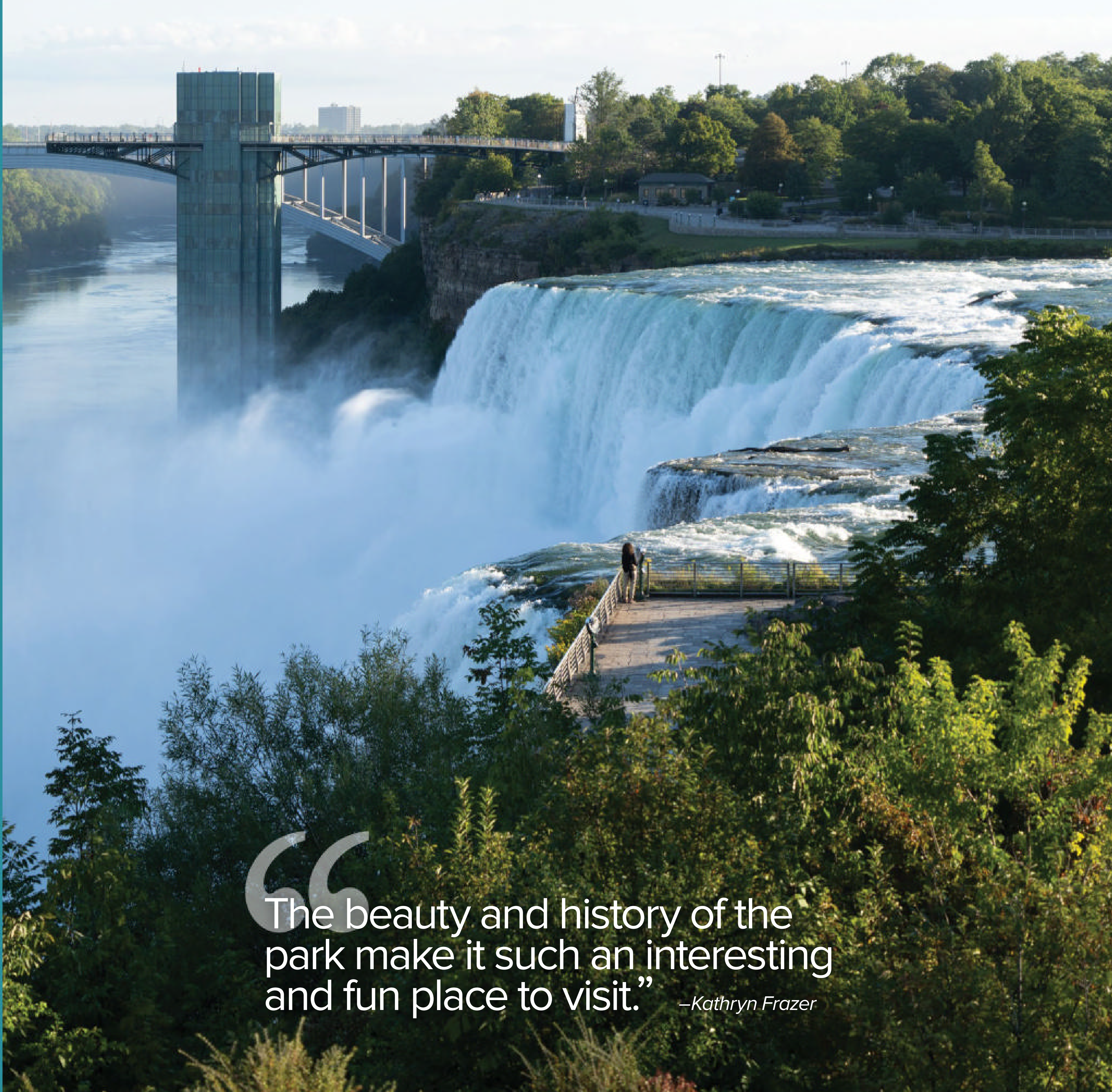
Visitors can enjoy a range of activities centered around Niagara. At the top, trolley rides and walks to overlooks bring people to the water's edge. At the bottom, boat trips to the falls provide an exciting up-close view. You can even venture underneath the falls!

? **FUN FACT:** *Niagara Falls State Park was established in 1885, making it not only the first state park in New York, but also the first in the United States.*

Photos contributed by Kathryn Frazer ***@adventuresofaplusk***







> "The beauty and history of the park make it such an interesting and fun place to visit." *–Kathryn Frazer*

$$$

BOUVIER BRIDGE RV RESORT

7838 Dixie Highway, Ira Township, MI 48023

This is one of the few RV parks in the Detroit area. Everyone working for the owners is great, and we loved that they don't have a ton of rules. For fellow full-timers, they also accept packages and sometimes deliver to your site. They pick up garbage from your site whenever you leave it out, too.

The park has a lovely pool, and they sometimes set up a bounce house or kiddie pool for kids to play in. The camp store has a selection of things you might need, including bags of ice. While there isn't a dog park, you'll find a big area in the back where you can let your dog run off leash (and there is a super dog park about 15 minutes away).

In high season, they offer free donuts on the water side on Sunday mornings, and a band or DJ plays on the marina side every few weeks. Speaking of the marina side, if you travel with a boat, you'll be close to many boat launches. The park is within 20 minutes of major grocery stores, as well as a couple of local farm stands.

Contributed by Anne Klumpp @ontheroadofadventure

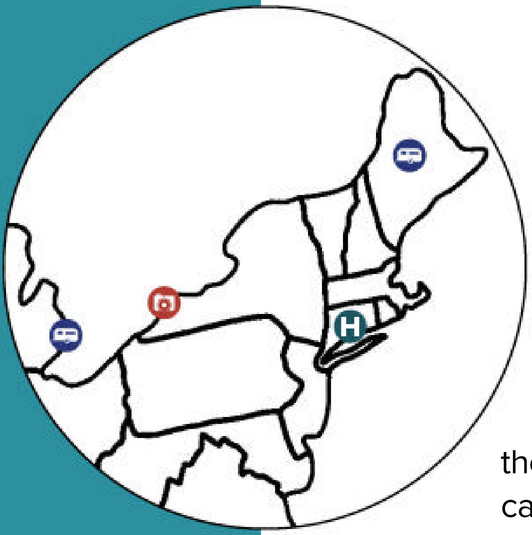
HARVEST HOSTS

BISHOP'S ORCHARDS FARM MARKET AND WINERY

1355 Boston Post Road, Guilford, CT 06437

Looking for the best apple cider donuts in New England? Here they are. Bishop's is a great location on an orchard with a farm store and seasonal activities for the whole family. Plus, the drive out is pretty incredible during the fall season, which is when they open their corn maze!

This place is a little sanctuary when traveling through Connecticut, especially coming through the city of New Haven. Members love the baked goods and peacefulness of the area. You can even wake up to farm animals! A llama view with coffee? We're in.



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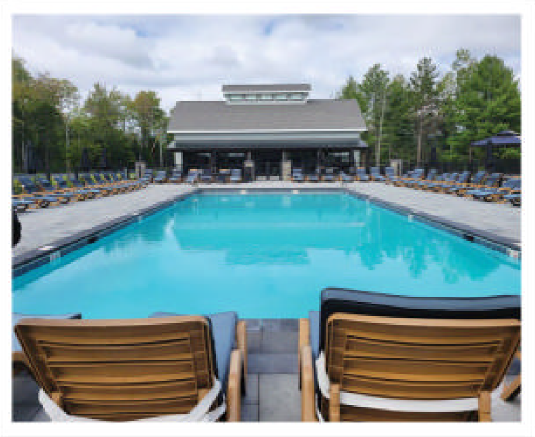
MOOSE CREEK RV RESORT

58 East Road, Greenville, ME 04441

We loved everything about this campground and were glad we booked for a month! This park is very impressive, from the layout to the landscaping and the fancy fire pits. Moose Creek truly is a resort-style campground, with amenities such as a large heated pool; a 3.5-acre stocked fishing pond with kayaks, paddle boats, and canoes; a restaurant and bar with live music on the weekends; a camp store; a dog park; volleyball and basketball courts; and a playground. The roads are gravel, and there are pull-through and back-in spots. All the sites are large and spacious, and they have picnic tables, large gravel patios, and full hookups with 20/30/50-amp electric. There is no cable, but many sites have a clear view to the sky, so you can get satellite or over-the-air channels.

The pavilion and café are the hub of activities and a great place to grab a bite. The food is more creative than what you would typically find in a campground—think a smoked trout plate, charcuterie, and slow-roasted pork pile nachos. They also have a full bar and a great beer list. There are outdoor propane fire pits with comfortable chairs and many farm tables for seating.

Contributed by Nancy Walters @rvagogo



A Magazine For RVers By RVers

RV TODAY
ISSUE 5 • AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2022
Traveling THE Oregon Coast
SOLAR 101
Understanding How Solar Works
Tips for RVing in Mexico
plus
High-Tech RV Accessories • Exploring Michigan State Parks
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MUST-HAVE RV Toys

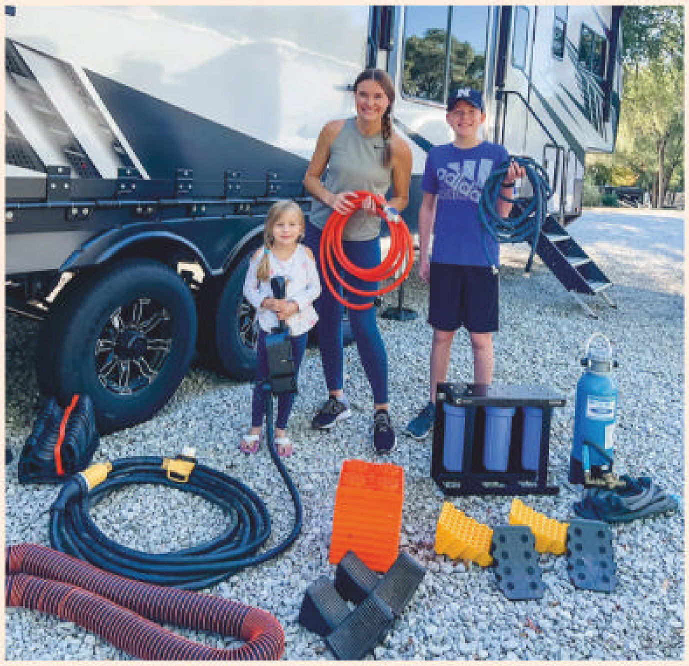
ACCESSORIES FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE

Most RVers are total gearheads, so when we asked our readers to share their favorite RV toys, we received a huge response. Glampers and minimalist campers alike shared the RV gear they can't live without. Check out this list to prepare for your next road trip!

RV ESSENTIALS

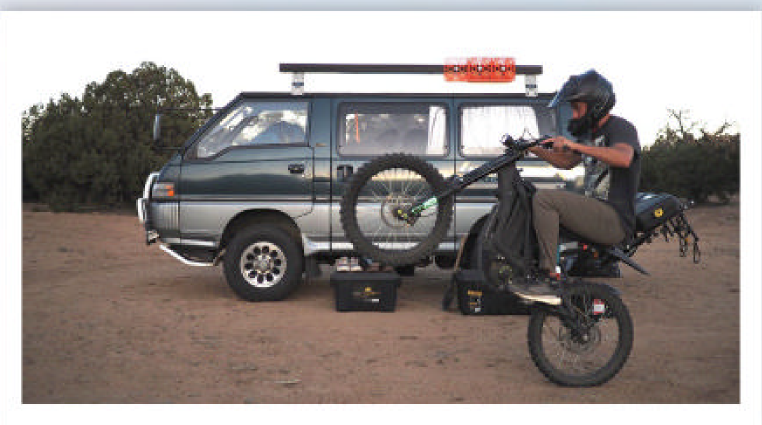
There are a few items that truly are the bare minimum essentials for RVing. If you're boondocking, this list will likely be a bit longer, but for campground visitors, Leanna and Joey of @simply.scenic shared this list of critical items they won't leave home without:

☐ **Power extension cord and surge protector**
☐ **Power adapter cords**
☐ **Freshwater hose**
☐ **Sewer hose and supports**
☐ **Tank deodorizer**
☐ **Leveling blocks**
☐ **Wheel chocks**



OUTDOOR GEAR

Beyond the basics, there are a ton of great accessories that help enhance both the outdoor and indoor living experience while RVing. One of the best places to start is with gear for your favorite outdoor hobbies.



Before she started pursuing international adventures, Kayla Hodges enjoyed bringing her **Sur-Ron electric dirt bike** on the back of her van to enable further off-road exploration. At just 110 pounds, this dirt bike is easier than most to carry on the back of a vehicle, and more approachable for smaller or novice riders. *@kaptain.kayla*

Many consider surf bums to be the original vanlifers. Greg Williams and his wife, Jess Stiles, travel with several **surfboards** on the side of their van in pursuit of the perfect wave. Although their travels take them all over the world, their surfboards see the most use in Baja California, Mexico, where they've been lucky to catch some amazing swells in remote locations. *@drifter.journey*

E-bikes are another popular form of alternative transportation that we're seeing all over the RV community. Howard and Katelyn Newstate love their Lectric e-bikes because they can leave the campground and explore the area without the hassle of packing up their rig! *@newstatenomads*

Jenn Jackson and her wife, Brandy, have spent a significant amount of time in the Florida Keys, where a **kayak** is a necessity! If you want to leave the hustle and bustle of touristy spots, taking the kayak out to a remote beach is sure to be a lasting memory. *@journeying_jacksons*

Drew and Brittany Glickman have spent many years enjoying **wakeboarding,** including living in their van at a wakeboarding park in South Carolina. In fact, their passion for the sport led to Drew's career in filmmaking, and he has traveled all over the world doing both. *@liveforadvanture*

CAMP LIVING

Wok-style portable grill

> We love how easy it is to make great-tasting food that is really easy to clean up!"
>
> —*Dominique and Gio Bartolotta @experiencebaggers*

Frankie and Alex McCullough have visited almost 100 ski resorts in the United States and Canada while living in their van. Although they are currently pursuing much different weather in South America, they have big goals of doing another **snowboard** circuit one day. *@fnavanlife*

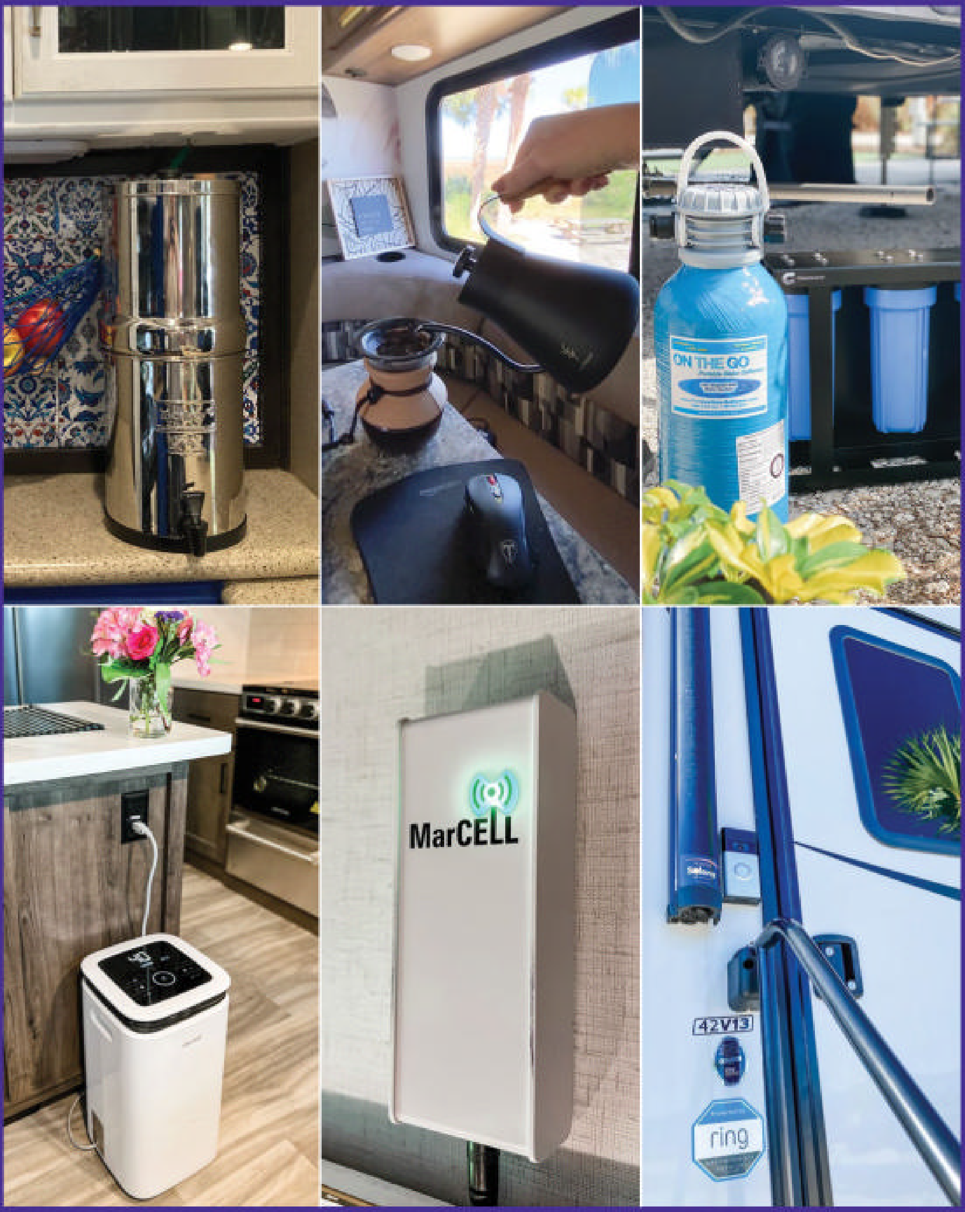
Portable hammock "I love my portable hammock with a stand because I don't have to worry about finding somewhere to hang it. It easily fits in my RV garage and unfolds in less than a minute. What better way to relax and take in the view?" —*Lisa Warfle @roamwithlisa*

Propane fire pit
“We love that it’s easy to turn on and off, and our clothes never smell like smoke!”
—*Skelton Family @_neverstopadventuring*

Camp Smoker
“A smoker is only limited by your imagination, from traditional smoked meats to smoked cheese or smoked cheez-its.”
—*Kendra and Jeremy Crawford @countryside_rving*

Portable movie projector

> Who doesn’t love dinner with a view and a movie?”
>
> —*Sara and Rich Combs @thejoshuatreehouse*



INTERIOR UPGRADES

Pour-over coffee maker “I don’t want to sacrifice my morning coffee routine when I’m working from the road! After trying several options, the pour-over is my preference for the perfect way to start my morning … and working with a view of palm trees and the gulf doesn’t hurt, either.”
—*Lisa Warfle @roamwithlisa*

Berkey water filter “One of our favorite items in our RV is our travel Berkey water filter. Although we sanitize our tanks regularly and use an inline water filter, we still had yucky-tasting water at many campsites. Our Berkey gives us peace of mind knowing we always have clean, safe drinking water.”
—*Christina Pate @tedsrvtravels*

Leanna and her family have a few additional items she says have absolutely improved their RV travel.

☐ **Clearsource Ultra RV Water Filter System with Virus Guard**
☐ **Waykar 1750 square faoot dehumidifier**
☐ **MarCELL cellular temperature, humidity, and power monitor**
☐ **Security system** —*Leanna Kreifels @simply.scenic*

Next time you pack up the RV for a trip, be sure to consider a few of these upgrades to enhance your adventure. ■

What is your favorite RV gear? Share it with fellow readers by emailing us at collab@rvtoday.com.

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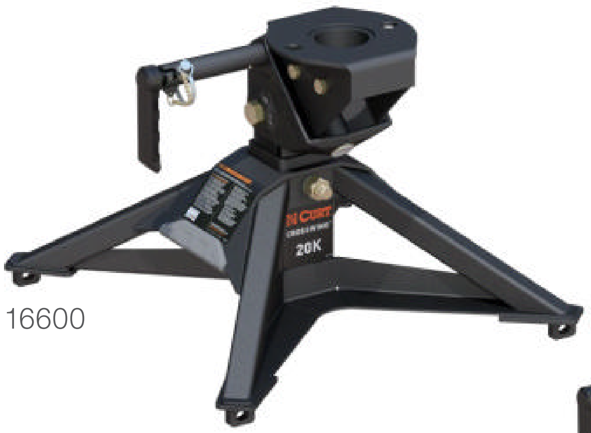

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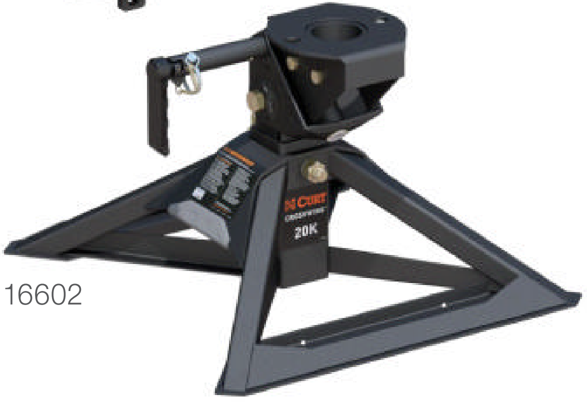

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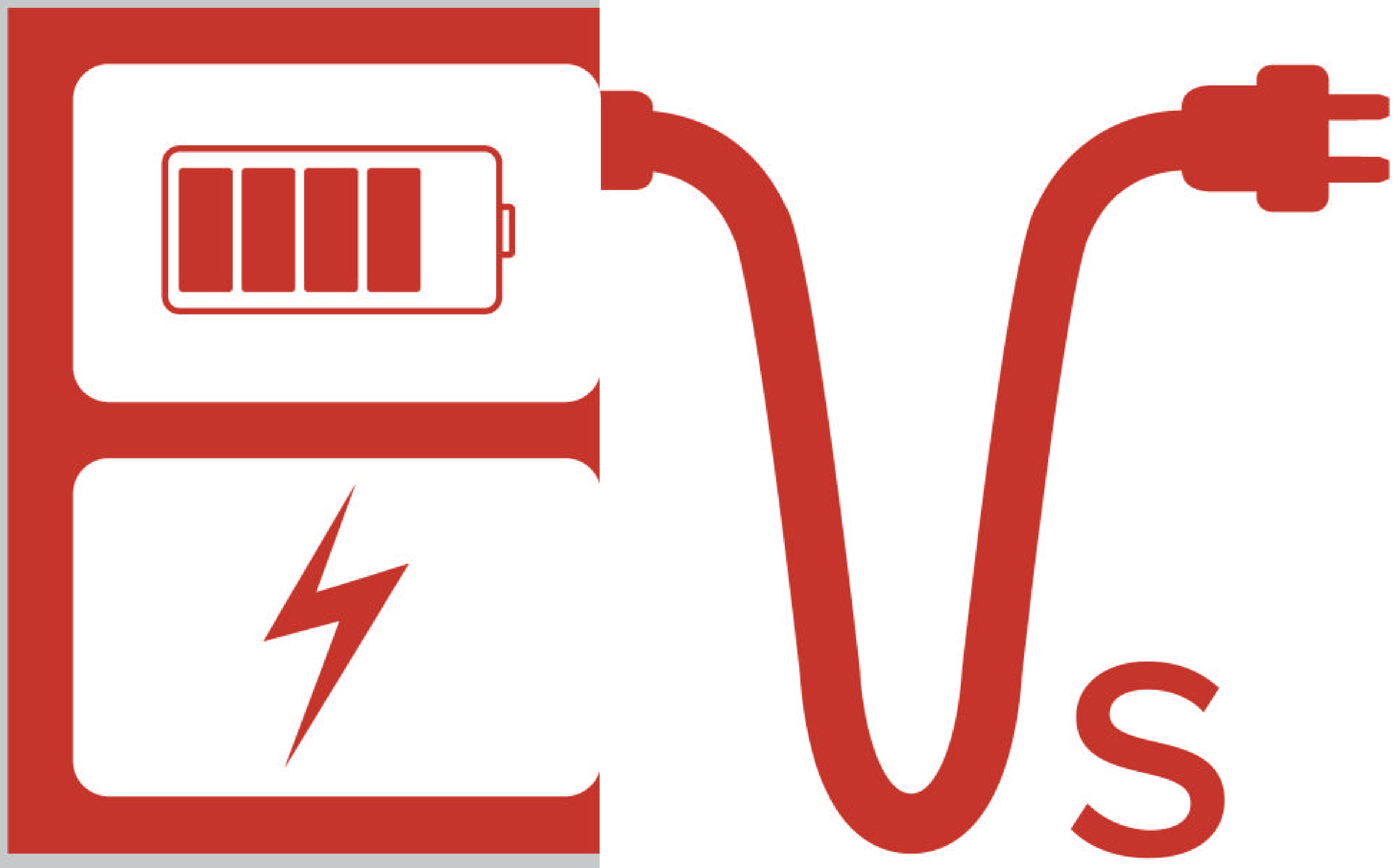


EVs FOR RVs

IS IT TOO SOON TO USE ELECTRIC VEHICLES FOR RVING?

By Celeste Orr

F**or many RV lovers,** it was the Rivian R1T Camp Mode ad that first made us start dreaming about ditching our gas guzzlers, buying electric trucks, and taking them on the road. Then Ford announced the Lightning, and we watched the dramatic reveal via a 60-minute YouTube livestream. It was more than just Tesla now—the electric vehicle market was getting serious, and it got my attention.

My family and I were interested in owning an EV, and the timing felt right, but the waiting lists were too long, the prices were too high, we had too many questions, and the risk felt unreasonable.

We knew our 2013 F-150 EcoBoost wasn't going to last much longer. We'd put 200,000 miles on it while driving all over the United States, and it had hauled our overloaded Airstream up and over too many mountain passes. And now, we were giving up Airstreaming in favor of more agile trips. We knew an EV would help us do that, but we didn't want to get stuck or be limited.

It's a feeling outdoor and RV lovers know well. A recent Washington Post article began, "For many Americans, electric vehicles are alluring up until the point they think about taking it on a long road trip."

We all have doubts, and it's clear we're depending on both the public and private sector to help us do what's best for our planet long-term without cramping our present wanderlust.

For months, these ideas had been creeping into our kitchen table discussions, making their way across our bedtime chats, and annoying the heck out of our kids.

We had test driven a Tesla, salivated over the look of the Kia EV6 and Hyundai Ioniq 5 in online searches, and ultimately decided we still wanted a truck, so we were either going for the Rivian or the Lightning. Since the waitlist for the Rivian was outrageous at the time, we paid the $100 deposit to put our name in with Ford.

Then, it happened—a frantic phone call including the words, "I don't care what we have to do; as soon as I get home, we're getting a new vehicle." I knew it was dramatic, but I couldn't help it. I was on a solo road trip and I'd heard more than enough rattling and grinding from our truck. The F-150 had officially outlived its glory days and passed into unreliable territory. It was time for something new.

After months of waiting without moving any closer to the top of the Ford Lightning waiting list, we reached our breaking point. We started calling around in search of our second choice, the Kia EV6. Three days later, we found a dealership near Boston getting a delivery that afternoon, put our name on the red one, and drove five and a half hours to do the test drive, sign the papers, and make her ours.

Now, six months after buying our Kia EV6, we've put 10,000 miles on her and we're hoping we can answer questions for other outdoor lovers considering an EV purchase.

What's the range—how many miles can you go on a full charge?

A: We get around 300 miles on a full charge. That's the easy answer, but we have to include a couple of disclaimers. First, every EV is different, so we can only speak about the EV6. Second, as I write this, we've only driven our car in ideal temperature conditions, and mileage is said to go down in extreme cold or heat. Also, range is estimated based on the way you use your car, so ours is based on how we drive.

How long does it take to recharge?

A: Charging time depends on battery size, capacity, health, and age, and on car make, model, and age. To keep a healthy battery, the slow charge method is best. That means we charge our car at home most of the time and it takes around 24 hours to get from 10 to 100% on our RV 50-amp plug. We also use our house plug for a slower charge, taking about 48 hours to get from 10 to 100%. Since our car's battery usually doesn't get below 30%, we only charge it overnight a couple of times per week.

That being said, fast chargers are critical when you're traveling. When we're in larger cities, we charge at a DC Fast Charger—usually an Electrify America Level 3 charger—and it takes about 20 minutes to charge from 20 to 80% or about 25 to 30 minutes to get to 100%. When we're in smaller towns, we charge at whatever fast charger is available, sometimes taking as long as 45 minutes to get from 20 to 80%. (We've seen quite a few interesting small-town attractions while waiting).

What's the charging versus gas cost comparison?

A: This is pretty difficult to estimate and varies significantly based on vehicle, but after six months and 10,000 miles of owning our EV, we've spent about $100 at charging stations and an estimate of $500 charging at home for a total of $600. We would have spent about $2,200 on gas during that time.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION

How difficult is trip planning when you have to consider charging instead of gas?

A: There is definitely more planning involved than pumping gas in the tank and setting off. When we're planning a long road trip, we consult the PlugShare map before anything else. We have to look at weather factors as well as traffic, and we also have to consider what type of chargers we want to use based on how long we want to stay in an area and how fast we want to get to our destination.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATION

chargepoint
IN USE

What does it drive like? How much power do you have?

A: I've been surprised by how many people have asked us this question. It seems like most people are expecting us to say our EV drives like a Prius, but it doesn't! In regular drive mode, I can beat anything off the block at any red light (trust me, I've tried), and in sport mode, I can knock unsuspecting friends and family members back in their seats. So no, it doesn't lag.

How bad is your range anxiety?

A: I'll admit I was pretty nervous about buying a car that depends on a refueling infrastructure that's not really there yet, especially where I live. But I'm happy to report that I haven't had range anxiety at all. Setting out with a plan for where we're going to charge makes me feel super confident … with the exception of that one time my husband decided to push past the charging station to get home faster, leaving us with less than 5% on our battery.

chargepoint

DC CORRIDOR / FARMINGTON
Charging

Celeste shares her family's travels on togethernessredefined.com

Give it to me straight—what are the downsides?

A: Honestly, the two biggest downsides we've found are: Most people find it incredibly difficult to figure out how to use the recessed door handles. Spur-of-the-moment road trips require some not-so-spur-of-the-moment planning ahead.

Overall, I can't tell you if it might be too soon, too risky, or too expensive for you to buy an EV for yourself and your upcoming adventures, but I can tell you this—I'm sure glad I bought mine. ■

THE *Honest* TRUTH

A Full-Time RV Family Shares What They Wish They'd Known

By Scott Russell

When people think about full-time RVing, they envision sightseeing and adventures by day, campfires by night, and the freedom to travel wherever and whenever you like. That is exactly what we envisioned when we were considering this lifestyle! After seven years on the road, there are things we wish we'd known when we were getting started.

Before we started RVing, our family had never been camping, or even been in an RV, but we had a deep desire to travel more and spend quality time together while our daughter was young. We had no idea what we were doing, but we sold everything and dove into this exciting lifestyle. Some days match what we thought full-time RVing would look like, but many don't, and here are a few reasons why.

RV LIFE IS NOT A VACATION

It didn't take us long to realize all the problems and tasks of daily life follow you on the road. When you travel in your RV, you still have bills to pay, dishes to clean, and laundry to do, on top of school or work! With vacations, you can catch up on everything beforehand in order to just relax during the trip itself. Now, life is one ongoing trip. Enjoying this lifestyle is all about finding balance on the road. Everyone

has their own pace, and it can take some time to find it.

RVING FULL TIME IS A LOT OF WORK Setting up and tearing down camp, RV maintenance, and trip planning take quite a bit of time and effort. When you travel full time, you are always choosing the next destination, picking the best route, and finding a place to stay. It's exciting and freeing to be able to travel wherever you like, but a lot of organizing goes into each stop. In the beginning, it felt like more work than we anticipated, but as we got used to it, these tasks became easier.

BUDGETING DECISIONS CAN BE DIFFICULT Vacations often involve saving in advance to be able to afford everything you want to do, but most full-timers don't have the budget to splurge at every destination. This was a difficult adjustment for us at first. After all, when you arrive at these incredible places, you naturally want to see and do everything like you would on a regular trip. Coming up with a budget and easing into it for the first couple of months can help. Give yourself a little wiggle room to see what your real-life road expenses will look like, and then make adjustments where needed.

BIGGER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER Many people assume they need as much space as possible to transition from living in a house to living in an RV. We instantly gravitated toward the largest fifth wheels on the market so we could have plenty of space for our family and our stuff. We were only thinking about our RV being our home—we weren't thinking about how we actually wanted to use our RV. Large RVs with all the bells and whistles are nice, but our goal was to see as many national parks as possible during our time on the road, and many national park campgrounds only fit RVs smaller than 35 feet. This meant our 40-foot RV was too big for us to stay where we most desired! We recommend considering your travel plans alongside your RV wish list when making a decision.

Scott, his wife Vanessa, and their 12-year-old daughter blog about RVing tips, travel destinations, and the full-time RV lifestyle on their blog, ***theadventuredetour.com,*** *and on Instagram* ***@theadventuredetour.***

RV LIVING IS NOT ALWAYS CHEAPER There is a myth that full-time RVing is an inexpensive lifestyle, but while it can sometimes be cheaper, most people find that RV living isn't less expensive overall. Traveling is expensive in general, and when you travel constantly, expenses can quickly add up.

Campground costs and gas can add up to a house payment. Laundry, propane, and differences in food and gas prices in different parts of the country can equal or surpass home utility costs. We've found the largest unexpected expenses are RV maintenance and repairs—when you cover a lot of miles in an RV, things will break more often.

However, costs also vary depending on your travel style. For example, a full-time RVer who primarily boondocks and enjoys hiking and other free outdoor activities can save quite a bit of money compared to living in a house, while a full-time RVer who prefers staying at private campgrounds and enjoying museums, sightseeing, and guided tours can spend much more money traveling each month. Our family falls somewhere in the middle, and over our seven years on the road, our spending has averaged out to about the same as what we spent living in our house. Even though it's not necessarily a cheap lifestyle, we think it's worth it for the travel experiences and quality time together!

Full-time RVing isn't exactly as we envisioned, but in many ways, it's even better. In fact, that is why our two-year travel plan has now turned into seven years and counting. We've learned to work together as a family and embrace both the good times and the challenges. We have found the right pace of travel to enjoy our destinations and still have enough time for rest and daily living. But most importantly, we have learned to greatly value the freedom that we have to choose this lifestyle and the lifelong memories it has given us. At the end of my life, I want to look back and know that we went for it. This lifestyle isn't always easy, but it is so worth it! ■

ProjectTrek

Nate and Christian, the husband-and-wife duo Project Trek, are full-time RVers who love to experience the outdoors with their two kids, Ella and Andersen.

After suffering from the financial collapse of a failed business, Nate and Christian decided to take matters into their own hands and began the process of pursuing financial freedom. After completing their debt-free journey, they realized there was still something missing. They had a deep rooted desired to travel and spend more time with their children. Inspiration for full-time travel came from a week-long trip in a borrowed RV. Shortly after, the family dove head first into full-time RVing in April of 2017, when they hit the road in their Open Range Fifth Wheel by Highland Ridge RV. They have no plans of going back to the suburban life! Follow along with them as they navigate road schooling, healthy living and forming a community for other full-timing families.

@projecttrek

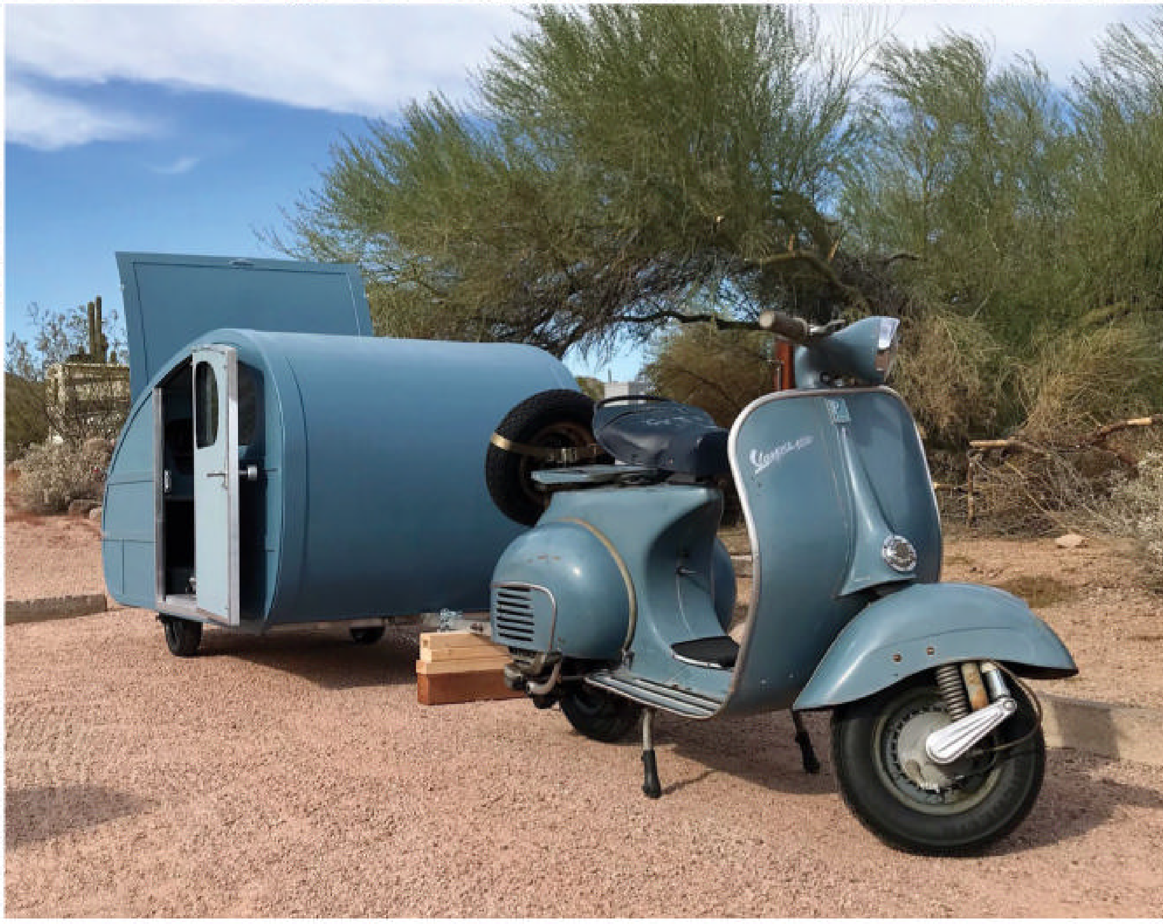
Micro CAMPERS

WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY YOU NEED ONE

Many camping enthusiasts eventually tire of sleeping on the ground, but don't want to give up camping altogether or spend a ton of money on a huge RV. Micro campers are the solution. Micro campers have so many benefits compared to full-size RVs and travel trailers that it's a wonder they aren't more popular.

LIGHTWEIGHT: Towable by most vehicles, micro campers weigh between 400 and 1,000 pounds. Trailers that small can easily be towed with a sedan or midsize SUV. In fact, David Carnes *(@dave.carnes)* tows an Airstream Basecamp with his AWD Tesla Model Y! Another benefit of having a lightweight camper is that you can pivot it around by hand if you need to get it into a tight spot.

> Everything has a purpose, and there is no wasted space.



EASY TO DRIVE AND PARK: In addition to being lightweight, micro campers fit in almost any campground space, mitigating concerns about showing up to your campground reservation and not fitting in your spot. They are shorter than the maximum length restrictions that some national parks have on tight roads, and they're also easy to maneuver at gas stations.

TINY LIVING FOR TWO: If your family unit consists of one or two people, micro campers are a great option. For larger families, they won't be a good fit unless you make the kids camp in a tent! But you can maintain a simple camping experience like the Healy family *(@adventuresinpopups)* does by going with a pop-up camper instead.

LESS IS MORE: Simple designs make for efficient camping and easy cleanup. Everything has a purpose, and there is no wasted space. Packing up and driving to the next spot is simple when all you have to do is put your chairs and wheel chocks away.

SLEEP BETTER: Most micro campers have at least a double size bed, if not a queen. Sleeping on a real mattress after long days of adventuring makes a huge difference in the quality of your trip. If you hate not sleeping well while camping, this might be your solution!

BUILD YOUR OWN: These little campers are so simple that some folks have built their own. Tom Burick *(YouTube @thetinysideoftiny7625)* built a tiny camper that he can tow behind his Vespa. Made of simple materials like foam and scrap aluminum, his homemade teardrop camper gets tons of attention at campgrounds. ■

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Exploring Flagstaff,

Horseshoe Bend

Arizona & Beyond

By Shannon Murray

We chose Flagstaff as a home base during our two-month stay in Arizona, and it proved to be a central location good for local adventure as well as day trips across Arizona and Utah. While we travel full time, we love sticking to places for two or three months to truly discover the area. A few bucket list activities were checked off while we were here, including skydiving and hiking into the Grand Canyon. Plus, we experienced unplanned adventures, such as climbing through lava tubes and learning a few words in Navajo! Full-time RV travel has opened our eyes to diversity, unique beauty, and unusual places within the United States that we would never have experienced otherwise.

WHERE TO STAY

Flagstaff has several full-service RV parks, including Grand Canyon Oasis, a newly-opened, family-run park in a great location. Just 30 minutes north of downtown Flagstaff and 50 minutes south of the Grand Canyon's east gate, it was an ideal jumping-off point for explorations. The park is surrounded by views of the San Francisco Peaks and the Painted Desert, and it's far enough from the city to offer stunning stargazing with full views of the Milky Way on clear nights.

Lava Tube

Downtown Flagstaff

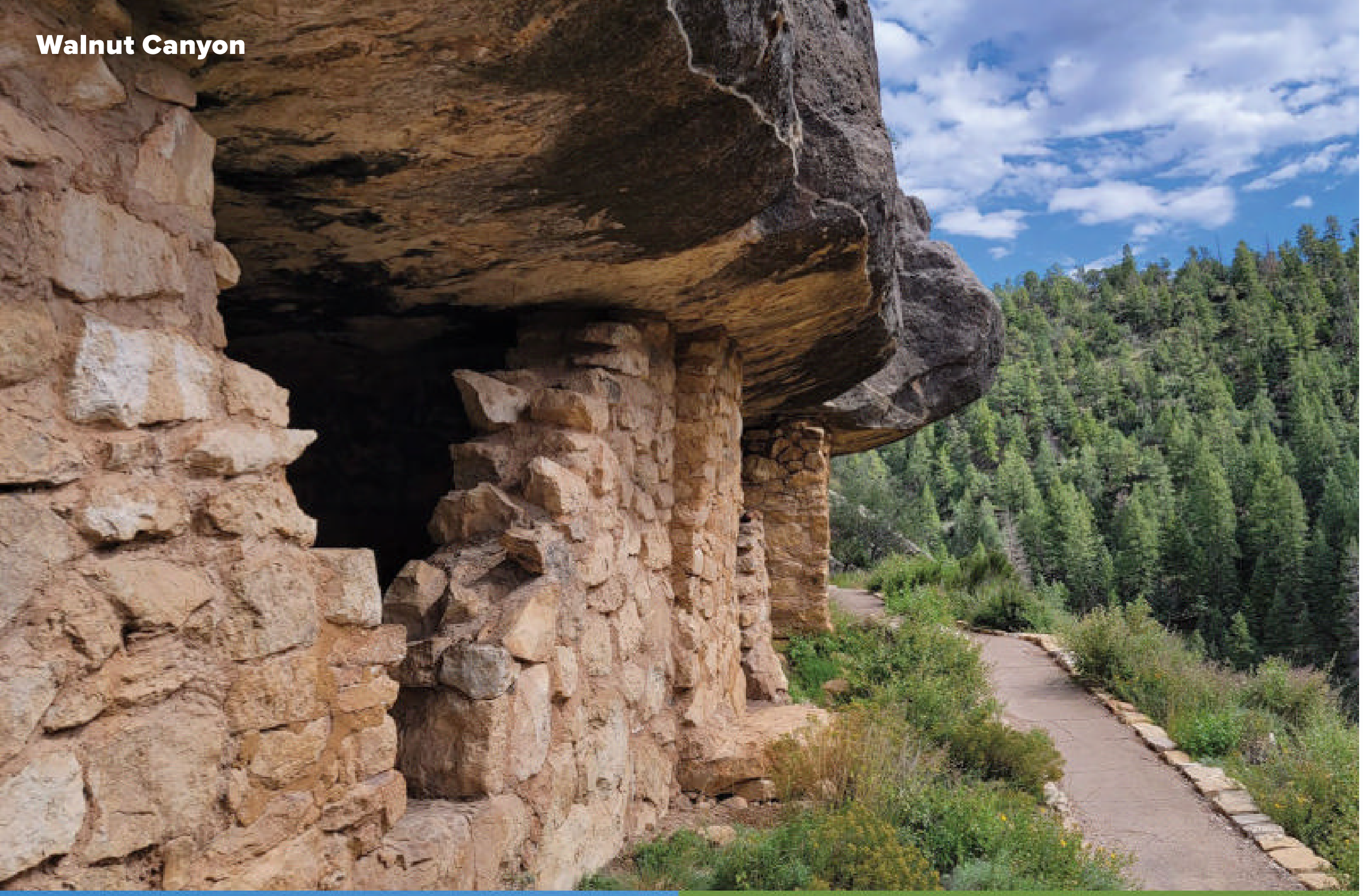
Sunset Crater

Things to do in Flagstaff

LAVA RIVER CAVE Inside the cave, surrounded by such darkness we couldn't see our hands in front of our eyes, I was more than glad to turn the headlamps on! The lava tubes have no natural light, so bring your lanterns and flashlights. Somewhere between spelunking and hiking, this trail within Coconino National Forest is one of the most unique in Arizona! Descend into a rocky pit that opens to caverns 30 feet high, while other areas of the trail require crouching or crawling.

DOWNTOWN FLAGSTAFF AND ROUTE 66 Route 66 runs through Flagstaff's historic downtown on its way from Chicago to Los Angeles. The city has a notable craft beer scene and plenty of bars (thanks to its college crowd) but it's also home to great dining options, from five-star restaurants to mom-and-pop cafes. It even boasts a Viking mead hall.

LOWELL OBSERVATORY Opened in 1894, the Lowell Observatory is a Flagstaff institution. It's so popular that the parking lot fills up on weekend nights. It's open during the day, but is most popular after the sun goes down. The observatory also offers science classes and stargazing programs.


Walnut Canyon

Wupatki National Monument

FUN FACTS

- There are six national monuments, two national forests, and one national park within 90 miles of Flagstaff.
- Pluto was discovered at the Lowell Observatory.
- Humphreys Peak is the highest point in Arizona, at 12,633 feet. Hike it if you dare!
- Flagstaff was recognized as the world's first International Dark Sky City.

Wupatki Pueblo

Sunset Crater and Wupatki National Monuments Scenic Loop

These two national monuments are located north of the city and should be visited together. They are connected via the Loop Road, allowing visitors to enter at one monument and exit through the other.

Sunset Crater is one of 600 inactive volcanoes in northern Arizona! This national monument has otherworldly landscapes, which are accessible both by driving and hiking.

Wupatki National Monument protects several pueblos built by the Hopi people during the 12th century. We visited a few pueblo sites around Flagstaff—these are by far the most well preserved, and are accessible via short trails. Pueblos are a hallmark of the southwest, so don't miss visiting some while in Arizona!

Walnut Canyon National Monument

This canyon is 400 feet deep and 1/4 mile wide, and is home to cliff dwellings carved by native tribes. There are only two trails in the park, but both are a must! Island Trail is less than 1 mile round trip and is somewhat strenuous, with steep stairs into the canyon. The trail provides direct access to a number of cliff dwellings, with views of many others scattered through the canyon. Rim Trail skirts the top and provides views into the canyon. There are also a few pueblo ruins near the picnic area.

Beyond Flagstaff

GRAND CANYON Your first glimpse of the Grand Canyon will live forever in your memory. It's a scene beyond words, pictures, or descriptions—and I'm not being dramatic! If you visit nothing else in Arizona, be sure to see the Grand Canyon.

From Flagstaff, the south and east entrances are the nearest, and the South Rim is overwhelmingly

Grand Canyon

the busiest. The east gate rarely has a line, and it's minutes to Desert View. From our RV park, we were close enough to the east gate to picnic after work and spend weekends exploring the trails.

Be sure to hike at least a portion of the Rim Trail. It's paved and wheelchair accessible from the South Kaibab Trailhead to Grand Canyon Village. For a bit more adventure, descend into the canyon via Bright Angel Trail.

ANTELOPE CANYON AND HORSESHOE BEND For a great day trip from Flagstaff, visit Antelope Canyon and Horseshoe Bend, which are just minutes from each other, and add a stop at Lake Powell.

Antelope Canyon is an incredible slot canyon located in Navajo Nation. The trail winds through sculpted rock, and the light throws pink, orange, and purple coloring across it. Tours are mandatory to access the canyon. Book them as far in advance as possible, but if you can't, check with tour companies for last-minute cancellations.

Social media has made **Horseshoe Bend** famous, so visit before 9 a.m. to avoid crowds. A 3/4-mile trail leads to the Colorado River overlook as it makes its horseshoe-shaped bend in the canyon below.

Meteor Crater

Petrified Forest

> “Full-time RV travel has opened our eyes to diversity, unique beauty, and unusual places.

Painted Desert

Antelope Canyon

METEOR CRATER This crater, a result of a meteor impact, is 550 feet deep and nearly 1 mile wide. Be sure to take the guided rim tour as it's the best way to view it. The Discovery Center and Space Museum offers hands-on exhibits and several shows.

During the 1960s, NASA astronauts trained for the moon landing in the crater, due to its unusual geography. Today, one of the Apollo 11 capsules is on display in the museum.

SEDONA Less than an hour from Flagstaff, Sedona is perfect for a date night or a day trip! The artsy town is home to plenty of shops and restaurants, several top-notch spas, and fantastic hiking. Psychic readings and tours to alleged energy vortex sites abound as one of Sedona's claims to fame.

A few noteworthy hikes include Devil's Bridge, the Birthing Cave, Cathedral Rock, and Airport Loop. During the cooler months, the trails can be unbearably busy, so go early, late, or during the heat of summer—but be sure to pack plenty of water!

PETRIFIED FOREST NATIONAL PARK This park is a great stop going to or from Flagstaff, and is very RV friendly. It closely follows Interstate 40, making it easy to enter one side and exit the other for a perfect detour. We didn't have any issues parking our truck and 35-foot travel trailer along the many stops in the park.

PAINTED DESERT For a relatively small national park, there's plenty to see. The park is home to a variety of attractions, including the petrified forests, ancient pueblos and petroglyphs, and the Painted Desert. Most of the petrified trees are in the southern half of the park, with the Painted Desert and pueblos dominating the northern side. ■

Follow Shannon and Bobby's adventures on Instagram @snorkelsandsnowpants or at snorkelsandsnowpants.com.

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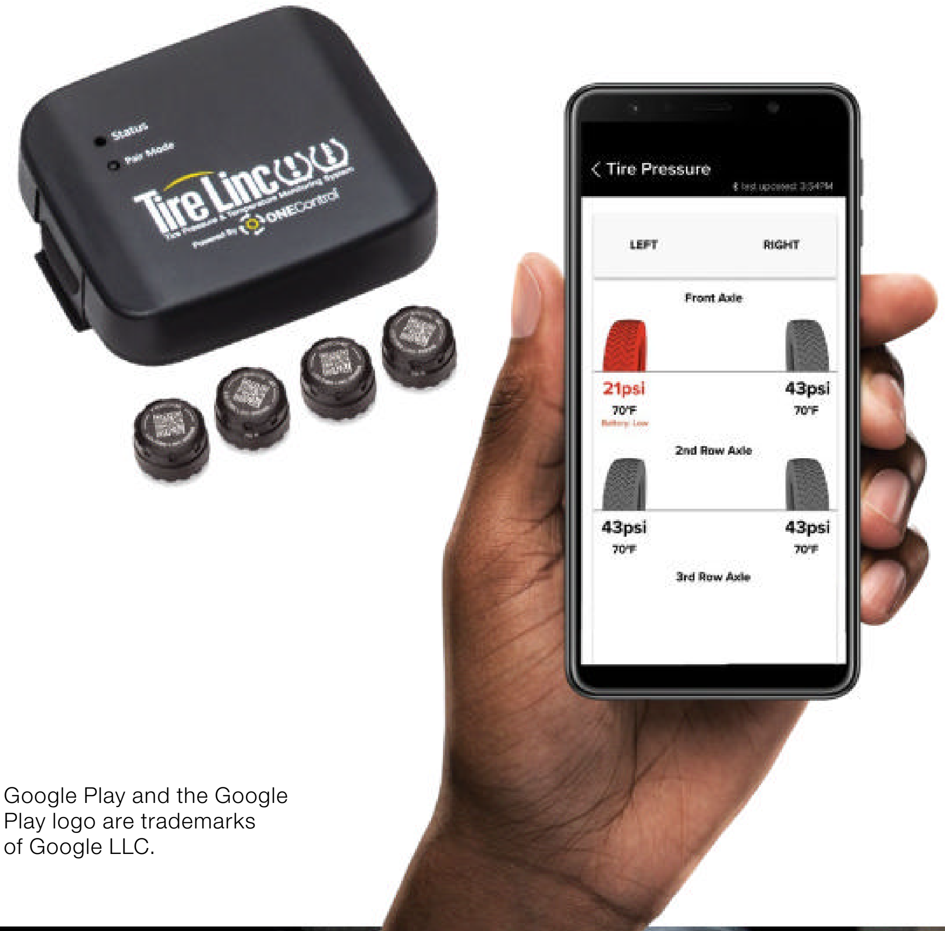
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The Reality Behind #Vanlife

By Emily Soon

The #vanlife movement is sometimes frowned upon, often misunderstood, and frequently romanticized on social media.

What is #vanlife?

Honestly, it means different things to different people. It can be a way to travel, sometimes while working remotely, or a way to save money on rent to afford a house down the road. It can be a temporary solution to a housing challenge, or the ability to not be tied to one location. For many, it's a lifestyle. When you ask vanlifers what it means to them, the word that comes up most often is freedom.

For me, it's flexibility. It's my home during the work week, my vehicle to get me from here to there, and my escape machine. It can take me to a beach after work to cook dinner at sunset, to the mountains for a few days of quiet, or to the city to connect with friends and family.

I took my first campervan trip in January 2020. At that time, I believed vans were for vacations. I was living overseas, and moved home to Canada a few months later, where I intended to explore my home country, north to south and coast to coast. With my campervan experience fresh on my mind, I decided that instead of buying a car and having to plan a route and book accommodation, a van was my best option. In May of 2020, I bought a cargo van and started to design a layout and look for a builder.

After hours down the rabbit hole of videos, photos, and blogs, I discovered that vanlife is a lifestyle that allows you to create any version of it that you want or need. You can be the adventure-seeking vanlifer, the remote-working vanlifer who travels the world,

or even the office-manager vanlifer living in a gravel parking lot. And by a whirlwind of circumstances, that's what I became.

World events, family obligations, and faulty van build mishaps slammed the brakes on my trans-Canada adventure. So, with nothing to lose, I pivoted! I took a job, moved to a town I'd never been to, parked in the company lot, and started life as a full-time solo female van-dweller.

I make the distinction between vanlifer and van-dweller because vanlifers are typically seen as adventurers, travelers, and digital nomads. Instead, I dwell. I have access to water, laundry, power, dumping—everything I need, right where I park. I don't have to hustle to find a place to fill my water or dump my tanks. I don't have a gym membership to shower, I don't have to think about where I'm going to park at night, and I don't have to worry about "the knock." Everything I need is just ... there. It's easy, and to be honest, it's made me soft.

When I leave the parking lot, my mind races. Where should I park? What time does it get dark? Do I have enough water? How full is the pee jug? How charged are the batteries? It's exhilarating and exhausting, and I revel in it! It takes me back to before my parking lot days, when I did have to hustle and worry about all the things vanlifers have to worry about!

After about two years, I got comfortable in my vanlife, both in the parking lot and on the move. But I wasn't always comfortable with living in the van, and the first six months were especially challenging. As with most things on the Internet, the reality of vanlife is often obscured because you're only seeing the highlight reels. The problem was what I was seeing online and what I was experiencing were two very different things.

I moved into the van at the beginning of my first Canadian winter in 10 years, and I was freezing all the time. I worried about water: Was there enough? Where would I get it? Why are my socks wet? Oh, because there's more gray water than the gray water jug can hold. I worried about electricity: Do I have enough battery charge? I don't know, I don't have a battery monitor. I worried about the propane tank: There was something wrong, but multiple mechanics said it was fine. This was #vanlife; it just wasn't the one I saw online.

I felt like I was failing and was ready to quit, and a friend told me that nobody expected me to know how to live in a van right away—I needed to figure it out and give vanlife a chance. So I created a vanlife bootcamp for myself. I checked into a campground with full hookups and bathroom facilities and paid for two weeks.

MACDONALD
BROADWAY
KITSILANO
BEACH
49TH MAIN MARPOLE

With full water, batteries, and propane, and empty gray water and toilet tanks, I started fresh. I learned:

- How long it takes to go through a full water tank, and how to conserve and stretch that number of days out
- How long it takes before I need to empty the gray water tank and pee jug
- How to fill the fridge to maximize space
- How many days I can go before I really need a shower
- Where everything should live in the cabinets for the most efficient access and the best use of space

The batteries were the only thing I couldn't figure out. I realized I needed a battery monitor, so I had one installed, and then I was able to figure out how much power everything used and how long I could go until I needed to charge. After those two weeks, I started to finally have some peace of mind, and I felt ready to leave the campground.

Anything new has a learning curve. Vanlife has a big one, but it seems nobody talks about it. During my bootcamp, I took to social media to record my struggles, reach out to people for suggestions, and air my grievances. And I found a community! Some of them were just starting out like I was, some were happy to teach me what they had learned, and some were hoping to start and found my struggles comforting. Two years later, those are still my people. Some have moved on from vanlife, and some have begun their journeys. I still have struggles and challenges—it's real life, not magic. But the community is still there, and they're still interested in supporting and learning.

There are a lot of misconceptions about vanlife. It's only once you get into this community or begin living the lifestyle that you truly begin to understand that no two vanlives are the same. And they shouldn't be! Enjoy the freedom, the flexibility, and create your own version of #vanlife. ■

Emily shares her adventures on instagram ***@emsvanlife.***

EVERGLADES

NATIONAL PARK

By Katelyn Newstate

One of the most interesting national parks in the United States is located deep in the southern tip of Florida. Everglades National Park is incredible, but it’s sometimes overlooked in favor of the more well-known parks. We’re here to tell you that it should be at the top of your to-do list, and we actually recommend taking a few days to fully immerse yourself in the incredibly diverse ecosystem. With a campground, houseboats, glamping tents, and the construction of a brand new hotel, there are plenty of comfortable ways to stay inside the park, and you’ll have activities like wildlife viewing, hiking, kayaking, and boating to keep you busy during your visit.

CROCODILES
ALLIGATORS

WHY YOU SHOULD VISIT

Everglades National Park was established in 1947 and boasts more than 2,300 square miles of ecosystems and 1,000-plus species of animals. It's actually the third largest national park in the contiguous United States, so it takes some time to explore! This land is also recognized as a World Heritage Site, an International Biosphere Reserve, and a Wetland of International Importance.

Freshwater and saltwater collide in the Everglades, and whether you're on land or in the water, you'll have ample opportunity to experience the diverse ecosystems found within the park. Besides the mangroves, did you know there are pine forests and tree islands? You can explore these through a system of hiking trails, elevated walkways, portage (canoe and kayak) trails, and guided boat tours—and you'll likely catch a glimpse of the wildlife as well. Along with manatees and many bird species, Everglades National Park is the only place in the world where crocodiles and alligators coexist!

We're accustomed to the sweeping vistas and magnificent landscapes of other famous national parks, but Everglades is different—you have to peel back the layers to fully appreciate what makes it so special. When planning your visit, we recommend making reservations for camping inside the park and a guided tour to help understand the complex environment you're exploring.

CAMPING AND ACCOMMODATIONS INSIDE EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK

Flamingo, the main campground inside the park, has a total of 274 sites, with 65 designated for RVs (in the T-Loop). 41 RV sites feature 50/30/20-amp electric hookups and 24 have no hookups. All sites are pull-through with a maximum RV length of 35 feet. Threaded water fill-up and dump stations are available in the campground.

A second campground, Long Pine Key, offers 108 dry camping sites from November through May. This campground offers back-in and pull-through sites that can accommodate RVs up to 45 feet. Several sites are reserved for no generator use, and there is a mix of shaded versus full-sun sites for RVs with solar panels. Threaded water fill-up and dump stations are available in the campground.

Both Flamingo and Long Pine Key Campgrounds are operated by a third-party vendor, and nightly fees vary depending on hookups, day of the week, and if you have a senior or military access pass. There is a separate national park entrance fee if you don't have a federal annual pass. We recommend purchasing an America the Beautiful annual pass for $80, which gives you access to all national parks.

If you're seeking unique accommodations, Flamingo also offers eco-tents. They come fully furnished from

November through April, and furniture is removed during hurricane season, but tents can still be rented unfurnished. Each elevated eco-tent comes with fans, electricity, and comfortable beds, and can accommodate up to four guests.

A brand new 24-room lodge and restaurant will join the accommodation offerings at Flamingo with a planned opening in 2023. The uniquely-designed hotel built from shipping containers will feature studios as well as one- and two-bedroom suites, with beautiful views of the Florida Bay. It's conveniently located within walking distance of the marina and the park's new visitors center. It's a fantastic way to stay deep inside Everglades National Park and have all the modern amenities of a hotel!

We stayed in the Flamingo campground and had plenty of room for our 25-foot RV and tow vehicle. Limited cell service is available through AT&T, but not from other major carriers. Pets are allowed in the campground, but are prohibited on all trails and from all areas of the park except along the roadsides. A major reason for these restrictions is for the safety of your pet as well as the wildlife, which is absolutely everywhere. During each day of our stay, we witnessed birds, foxes, manatees, alligators, and crocodiles in close proximity to the public areas and roadways. Stay alert at all times and heed all signage and warnings from rangers.

Booking camping or accommodations at Everglades National Park is pretty straightforward and similar to reserving campsites at many other parks, but it is not available through recreation.gov. You can click through from their website to book online with the third party vendor or call 1-855-708-2207 to reach their call center.

PLANNING YOUR TRIP

This park is most popular during the cooler winter months, but there is always something to discover. Visitors to South Florida frequently visit the Everglades as a day trip, but we recommend at least two or three days to really explore all the different areas. Ranger-led programs are available at multiple locations and you can book activities like a boat or tram tour. Reservations for tours are highly recommended, particularly for the boat tours, which operate in the more remote areas of the park. You wouldn't want to make the drive all the way there to find they're booked for the rest of the day!

THE EXPERIENCE

Taking a guided tour or ranger program when you first arrive will give you a much deeper appreciation and understanding of the park's history, ecology, and nature. During our visit, we joined a backcountry boat tour

ROBERT IS HERE
BANANAS
ORANGES
WORLD FA

instance, we quickly got the scoop on the differences between alligators and crocodiles, as well as where to find them in the park. Our knowledgeable guide pointed out several bird species and unique plant life, and shared stories of the people who have called this area home. It was a great introduction to the Everglades and helped us truly appreciate what we discovered as we began exploring on our own over the days to come.

On another day of our visit, we were fortunate to catch a ranger program all about alligators. The ranger shared lots of great information and also helped to dispel some myths. We highly recommend joining ranger programs at the national parks whenever you can!

Most of the experiences at Everglades National Park are self-guided, and there are plenty of options for exploring via land and water. During our visit, we rented kayaks from Flamingo to try a portion of a portage trail (at times, you carry your kayak or canoe on a short trail to connect to the next section of an aquatic route), took short walks along elevated walkways to experience mangroves and tree islands, and also hiked through pine forests. Each area is unique and helps make Everglades such a special place to visit.

There are several great must-stop locations nearby, too! Since 1959, the Robert is Here fruit stand has offered exotic fruits like mamey, dragonfruit, and eggfruit. With a petting zoo and delicious fruit smoothies, this is a fantastic roadside attraction. Just a short drive from the fruit stand is Schnebly Redland's Winery & Brewery. This restaurant, winery, and brewery offers something for everyone on beautifully-landscaped grounds, including a waterfall! Finally, to the north of Everglades is the infamous alligator alley and Big Cypress National Preserve. As the name indicates, you stand a great chance at seeing alligators when you take the Loop Road Scenic Drive, and particularly along the walkway at the Oasis Visitor Center. We counted more than 20 hanging out just below and next to the elevated path, and even more along the roadway.

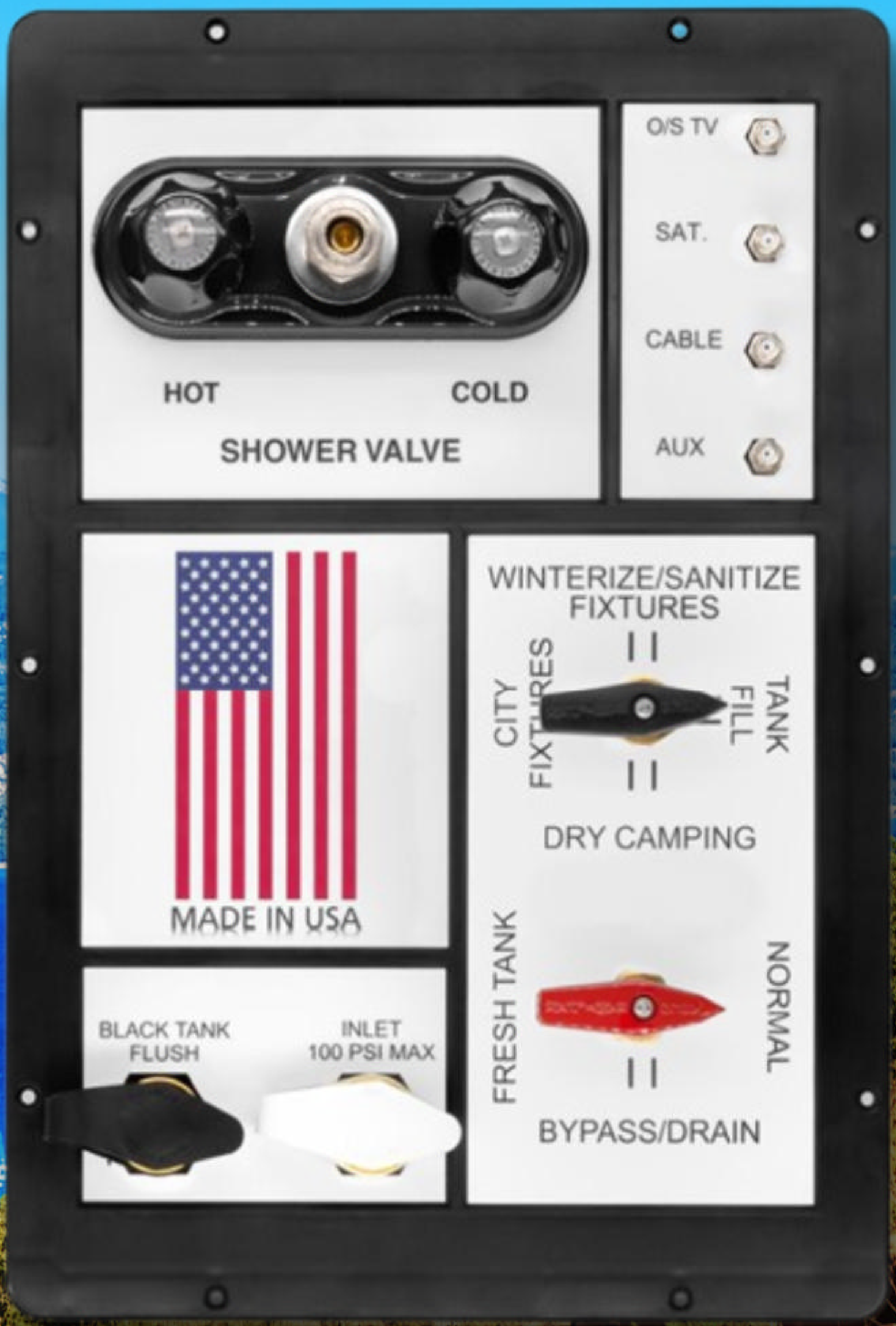
With lots of unique opportunities to immerse yourself in nature and accommodations to suit any type of traveler, we hope you plan a visit to Everglades National Park next time you're in South Florida! ■

Katelyn and her husband, Howard, share their travel videos on YouTube at ***Newstate Nomads*** *and on Instagram* ***@newstatenomads.***

MANRV102-P1B

RV PANEL

**QUALITY
BRASS
RV WATER
SERVICE
PANELS**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Organize & Storage

10 RVer Approved Products

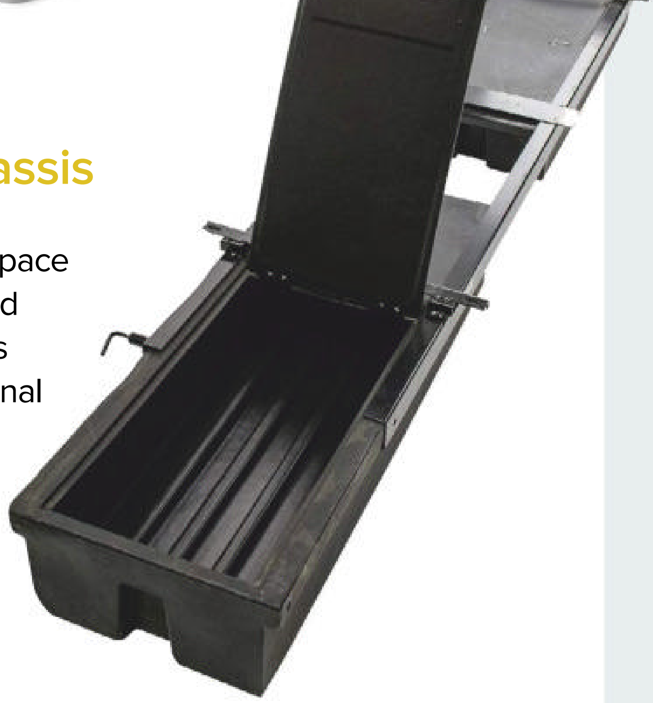
Keep your RV organized like a pro with these product suggestions.

Silverware Caddy

Keep silverware perfectly organized and always clean with this portable storage caddy that's great for RVs.

Nesting Bowls

This space saving solution will help you keep things streamlined in the kitchen.



Lippert Chassis Mount

Use the hidden space under your rig and install this chassis mount for additional storage.

hand soap
lotion

Bathroom Organizer

Create extra space in the bathroom with this mountable bottle holder for shampoo, conditioner and body wash.

FRESH WATER
BLACK WATER
ELECTRICAL
ACCESSORIES

Hose and Cord Bag

Hoses and cords can stay organized with this handy bag.

Sliding Cargo Tray

Reach things with ease with this sliding cargo tray by MORryde.

Dual Storage Ottoman

This storage ottoman doubles as a coffee table or bench for extra seating and also makes a great addition to an RV when space is at a premium.

Wall-Mounted Table

Wall-mounted tables can fold up for meals, or turn into a desk. They can also fold down to give you more space in the room, and become a shelf.

Hanging Wall Storage

To grab a little extra storage space wherever you can find it, use these hanging caddy bags with stickable wall hooks.

Shoe Racks

Dirt stays off the floor inside your home on wheels with these wall mounted shoe racks. ■

Events

Upcoming RV Events and Rallies

Stay connected with fellow RVers at these 2023 events

MARCH

Airstream Club 2023 Spirit of Suwannee Rolling Rally
March 3–5
Live Oak, FL

Atlantic Outdoor Sports and RV Show
March 10–12
Halifax, NS, Canada

Gulf Loners on Wheels
March 14–19
Sunrise, FL

APRIL

Great Alaska Sportsman Show
April 14–16
Anchorage, AK

Springtime in Kentucky Caravan 2023
April 26–May 19
Bowling Green, KY

2023 Grand Design RV Tucson, Arizona Rally
April 27–30
Tucson, AZ

MAY

Glamperfest Vintage Trailer Rally
May 4–7
Red Bluff, CA

Rainbow RV Arizona Camp Verde Cinco De Mayo Rally
May 5–7
Camp Verde, AZ

Rainbow RV Memorial Weekend Rally
May 26–29
Mammoth Lakes, CA

JUNE

RVs Move America Week
June 4–8
Washington, DC

The Museum of Bus Transportation/AACA Museum Spring Fling 2023
June 9–10
Hershey, PA

Family Motor Coach Association Midwest Area Rally
June 13–16
Chippewa Falls, WI

JULY

Eighth Annual Audrey's Jingle in July 2023
July 13–16
Sevierville, TN

RVing Women Mid-Atlantic Chapter
July 21–23
Woodbine, MD

Skoolie U.P. 2023
July 31–August 7
Gould City, MI

AUGUST

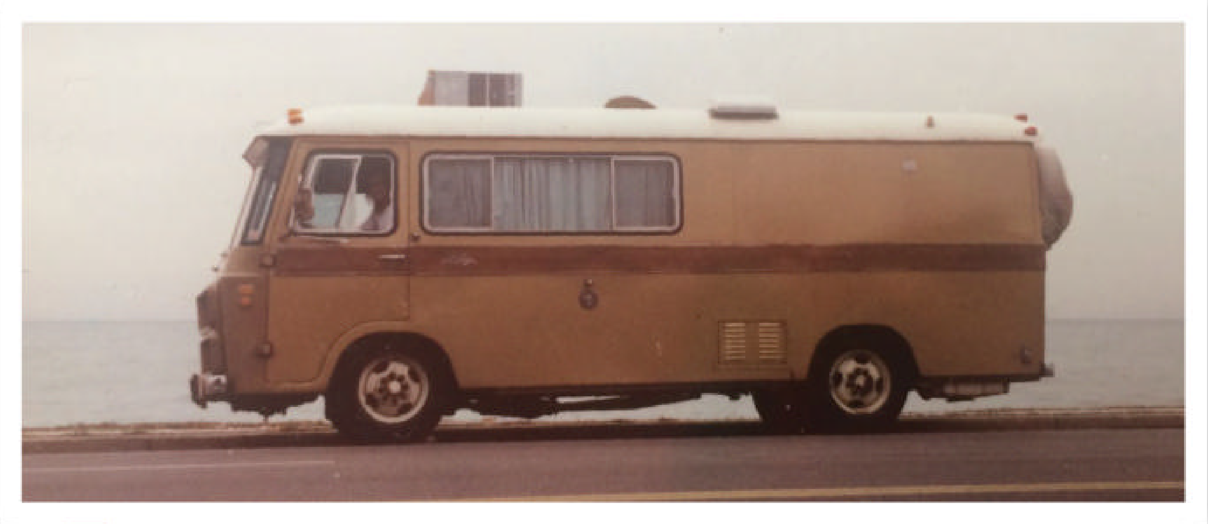
2023 Colorado Grand Design Owners Rally
August 3–6
Granby, CO

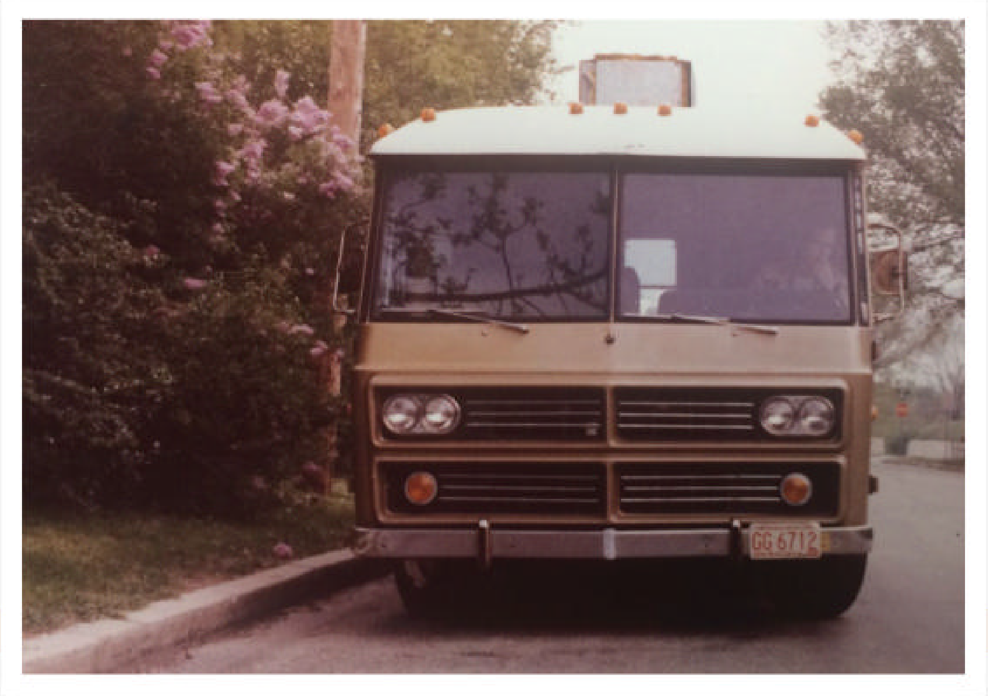
2023 Grand Design RV Ohio Owners Rally
August 3–6
Millersburg, OH

RVing Women Mid-Atlantic Chapter
August 9–14
Bear, DE

Events listed are a courtesy to our readers, with dates and details subject to change. For more information, contact the event organizers directly. If you want your next event listed here, please email ***info@RVToday.com.***

RV Yesterday





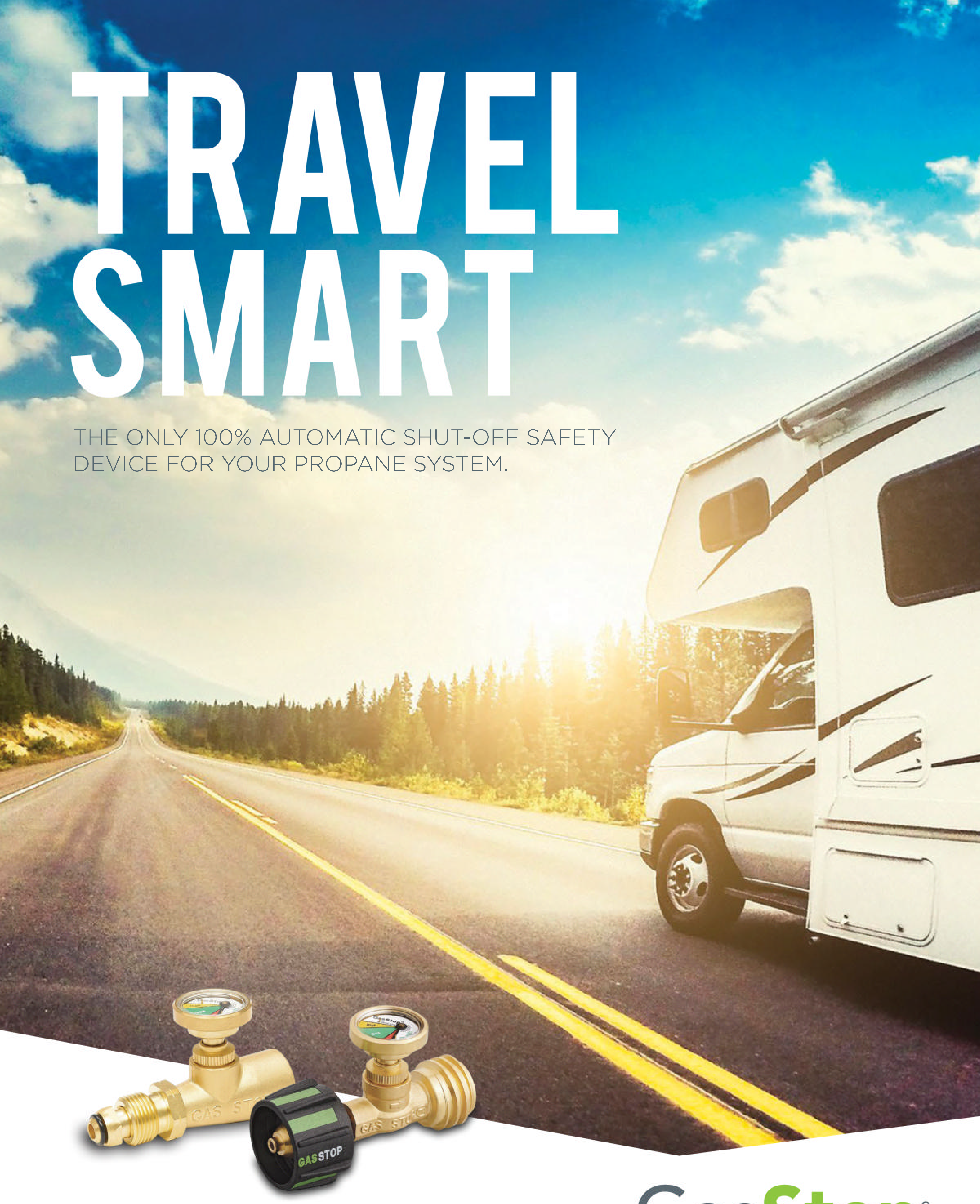
The Cortez from Clark

In 1963, an unusual manufacturer built and sold motorhomes—Clark, the forklift company. Clark produced the all-American Cortez, which became the first front-wheel-drive motorhome in the United States. With a different chassis, the vehicle was compact, efficient, and advanced, revolutionizing travel and life on the road.

The RV had an all-steel body, many large windows, and sleeping capacity for six—all of which were unheard-of traits at the time. The Cortez was marketed not just as an RV, but as a mobile office and sales room, ambulance, and fire truck as well. The Air Force even picked it up for shuttles, along with NASA, who used it for its Apollo 7 through 11 astronauts. (An original Cortez is still on display at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.)

The end came quickly for the Cortez, though. Winnebago was mass producing RVs for half the cost, and Clark sold its motorhome rights to Kent Industries in 1970. From there, some Cortezes were made with slight differences, then Kent gave up too. With the hopes of keeping the Cortez alive, a group of 26 enthusiasts purchased the production line, created a new company, and built a few more units before closing as well. Overall, only 3,221 motorhomes were produced in 16 years, and it is estimated that about 1,000 vehicles have survived.

Photo courtesy by Gary Riesing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GAS STOP

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